HORIZON

WINTER 1975

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WINTER, 1975 · VOLUME XVII, NUMBER 1

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The Useful Arts

"It is a fact," Arthur Koestler writes on page 25 of this issue, "that the most dramatic popular uprising in postwar history had been initiated by a handful of writers: novelists, playwrights, journalists, literary critics." Mr. Koestler refers to the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, and to the part played in that revolution by the Hungarian playwright Julius Háy, an excerpt from whose memoirs follows Koestler's introduction.

Mr. Koestler goes on to comment upon differences "between the role played by intellectuals in Western democracies . . . and in the various despotisms, past and present, in Central and Eastern Europe," and he concludes that, in the West, independent thought is common, is therefore taken for granted, and so tends to have no "explosive potential."

Writers in Western democracies can often be heard grumbling about the lack of "explosive potential" in their work. The other evening at a dinner party, a veteran journalist was overheard speaking in wistful terms of Soviet Russia, where writers are taken seriously enough to be imprisoned and exiled.

The bureaucrats of the Kremlin evidently know that what writers and artists have in common is independence of thought. The making of art and literature is by its nature the exercise of a unique, and uniquely free, spirit—or so it has been at least since the Renaissance in the West. It was during the Renaissance that enthusiastic humanists first noticed that artists "create" novel works, and thus share with the Divinity an inherently unconventional and revolutionary character. Artists champion, merely by their existence, individualism and liberty. And they threaten, by their existence, any society that does not similarly value the prize of autonomy.

It may be that people who live under despotism have greater need of their artists than those who live in open societies. A case can be made that the greatest art has been produced in repressive societies. Although the Renaissance is often perceived as a time in which new thoughts of liberty were awakened, in fact the Renaissance was characterized by tyrannical princes and oligarchs who destroyed the old democratic spirit that had flourished in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Shakespeare's England was ruled by a steely monarch. And the despotic czars of Russia ruled over Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Turgenev, and Pushkin.

The totalitarian despots of the twentieth century attempted to go beyond mere repression and spawn

their own artists—thus the dreadful fascist hacks of Hitler's Germany. Yet no modern government has ever successfully co-opted art; artists have been suppressed or expelled, but the nature of their work will not permit them to be co-opted. Nor has art ever successfully accommodated itself to a party line. Indeed, few genuine artists have successfully accommodated themselves systematically to any convention. Artists *will* be autonomous, or cease to be artists.

After World War II, the Soviets destroyed the Hungarian nation, Hungarian politics, Hungarian leaders, Hungarian businessmen and farmers, teachers and newspaper publishers and editors. They couldn't destroy Julius Háy. The story of Julius Háy, then—the story of the forgotten trial of a little-known playwright in a distant country under an alien tyranny—is a story of a hero for us all. We can be thankful that Western democratic societies do not have the same sort of need for artists that Hungary has, but we may be thankful, too, that the Julius Háys are with us in the event that we should ever come to need the arts as our last bastion of liberty. —C.L.M.

• • •

Readers of HORIZON will find missing from the masthead of this issue the name of William Harlan Hale. His death is a grievous loss to us and to all who knew him.

Bill Hale began his journalistic career at Yale, where he was the co-founder and editor of a lively and (by the standards of those days) irreverent magazine called *The Harkness Hoot*. He worked on the editorial staffs of *Vanity Fair* and *Fortune* until, during World War II, he became head of the O.W.I. program of broadcasts to Germany. After the war he served as senior editor of *The New Republic* and later as editor of *The Reporter*.

We came to know Bill Hale professionally when he wrote an article for AMERICAN HERITAGE on the curious career of Karl Marx as London correspondent of the *New York Tribune*—an article that grew out of his book *Horace Greeley, Voice of the People*. He was managing editor of HORIZON when it began publication in 1958 and became its editor in 1961. Later he was editor of HORIZON Books and a member of our Advisory Committee.

We who worked with Bill Hale will always remember him with affection and respect. He had the gifts of a great journalist, the bearing of a diplomat, and the character of a true gentleman. —J.J.T.

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COVER: A luminous, almost exotic quality pervades Jan Vermeer's *Girl with a Red Hat*, reproduced to size. Now hanging in the National Gallery in Washington, D.C., the portrait was painted about 1667, when Vermeer was in his thirties and the Golden Age of the Dutch Republic was at its height. Anthony Bailey examines in detail the politics, culture, and daily life of that splendid era in "The World of Jan de Witt," beginning on page 4.

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON, D.C., ANDREW W. MELLON COLLECTION

MUSEUM VAN DER VORM, ROTTERDAM

The World of Jan de Witt

MANSELL COLLECTION

In 1653, when Jan de Witt, above, became de facto *head of the Dutch Republic, Emmanuel de Witte, no relation, painted the scene at left of traders buying and selling in Holland's leading mart, the Amsterdam Exchange.*

Under him, the Dutch bested the great powers
at arms and commerce,
in art and science. Then, in a moment of panic,
they killed him—
and their Golden Age turned to dross

By ANTHONY BAILEY

In Rembrandt's Staalmeesters, *the leaders of the Cloth Guild look up from their work, as if interrupted at it.*

So much of what we think of as the Dutch Golden Age is conjured up by paintings—the luminous calm of Vermeer, the domestic serenity of De Hooch, the peaceful landscapes of Ruysdael and Hobbema—that we forget other characteristics of that time. Particularly worth recalling are the rough-and-ready busyness of the age, the tumult of trade and moneymaking, the boisterous taverns and the whirring sawmills, the rattle of blocks and shivering of sails as the East Indies fleet tacked around the Pampus shoal into the entrance of Amsterdam harbor and home, rich. We should recall, too, the painstaking political skill that kept the little United Provinces briefly in the forefront of European affairs, though even here we can find paintings that enable us to see the Dutch leaders in action—as in *The Staalmeesters* by Rembrandt, where we come upon six men at a carpet-covered table, an account book in front of them. These austere patricians, regents of the Cloth Guild, might also be burgomasters of their towns or deputies to the States of Holland. It was into their class that Jan de Witt—whom the English ambassador, Sir William Temple, was to call "the perfect Hollander"—was born in 1625.

That year, the United Provinces were forty-six years old. The struggle against Spanish rule, which had brought the provinces together in the Union of Utrecht of 1579, had been cut short by a truce in 1609, and imperial Spain ceased to be a danger to the small new republic with its fewer than two million people. De Witt's forebears were timber merchants who had risen to the top of their local governing class during the revolution of 1572 in the river town of Dordrecht, southernmost in the horseshoe of towns that even then gave Holland its tight-packed urban character. His father, Jakob, was a well-to-do burgomaster and deputy to the States of Holland.

Jan himself was a serious-looking boy whose face, as it developed, seemed to express application and shrewdness: strong eyebrows, searching eyes, pensive lips, slightly hollowed cheeks, and a powerful, sharply ridged nose. At the local Latin school he studied classics, math, French, English, German, music, and fencing; at Leyden University, he read law; then, following a grand tour with his older brother Cornelis, which touched the academic highspots of Paris, Geneva, and Oxford, he returned to The Hague to practice law and write conventional love poems to well-born young ladies. He showed more originality in mathematical research; his treatise on conical sections has been called "the first textbook of analytical geometry." He mastered the theories of Descartes, who was then living in Holland; in time he won a reputation for hard work, incorruptibility, and intelligence. In 1650, at the age of twenty-five, he was appointed pensionary of Dordrecht—chief counsel of the town and a deputy to the States of Holland.

Sixteen-fifty was a year of great reversal of fortunes in the United Provinces. The political situation was complicated but can be explained simply as a struggle between competing factions. One side favored the House of Orange, whose princes traditionally filled the semimonarchal position of stadholder. As captains-general they had led the fight against Catholic Spain, thereby winning the gratitude of the people and the Calvinist leaders, who often encouraged Orange ambitions to resume the war and win back the lost southern provinces. The other side supported the

BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE SERVICE PHOTOGRAPHIQUE

The young Jan de Witt before the Dordrecht council

DORDRECHTS MUSEUM — FOTO STEINS

Jakob de Witt, a portrait by Jan de Baen

Jan de Witt was born, in the bustling port of Dordrecht, into the wealthy ruling class of Holland. De Witt's father, Jakob, right, was the burgomaster of Dordrecht and a deputy to the States of Holland. Both De Witts were active members of the regents' party, which contested with the dynastic claims of the House of Orange for dominance in Dutch affairs. In 1650, at twenty-five, Jan de Witt became pensionary, or chief counsel, of Dordrecht: he takes his oath in the etching above, by Romeyn de Hooghe.

regent class, which stood, in general, for the rights of the provinces, a peaceful foreign policy, free trade, and religious tolerance. The regents' last great leader, Oldenbarneveldt, had been executed in 1619, but in 1650 interparty rivalry was still intense: at one point De Witt's father and five of his colleagues were imprisoned by the stadholder, William II, and the Orange army was advancing on rebellious Amsterdam. A few months later William II died suddenly of smallpox, with his heir still in the womb. The representatives of the seven United Provinces decided they didn't need an Orange prince as captain-general, and the five provinces that had elected the prince stadholder decided to do without one. Two years later, after a Dutch sea defeat by the English, as frenzied pro-Orange riots were erupting in many towns, the young pensionary of Dordrecht bravely accepted the post of grand pensionary of Holland—the province that had most of the republic's trade, shipping, and wealth.

As grand pensionary, De Witt was merely the legal secretary of Holland's delegation to the States-General of the United Provinces, but, since the post carried a term of five years, the man who filled it could acquire considerable power. The States-General met in the Binnenhof, the old seat of the Counts of Holland; it was close to the assembly room of the States of Holland, which communicated by an inner staircase with the pensionary's quarters: four small rooms staffed by four clerks, a secretary, and "a director of foreign dispatches." The pensionary's power derived from his being on the spot—with tenure, expertise, and his ability to persuade the delegates of the rights and wrongs of an issue. De Witt was a master at this, and the policies he secured agreement for by cajolery, explanation, and patient diplomacy generally worked out. He knew more than anyone else about the country's finances, and carried with him up-to-date figures on income and expenditure. Before long, foreign ambassadors such as Sir William Temple and the Count d'Estrades began to treat him as the man in charge of the United Provinces.

De Witt had a calm, unanxious temperament: he never had trouble falling asleep, and sleeping well—even on board a ship and faced with the necessity of dealing with mutinous captains the next day. His salary was modest, but family funds and investments kept him in comfortable circumstances: his mother-in-law left him 178,714 florins, a small fortune. Still, he lived without ostentation. "The whole train and expence of his domestique," Temple wrote, "went very equal with other common deputies and ministers of state; his habit grave, and plain, and popular . . . like the commonest burgher of the town."

Nevertheless, the young patrician moved quickly enough into society in The Hague. He wooed, without success, a daughter of the great Amsterdam physician and burgomaster Nicholas Tulp. The girl who accepted him—Wendela Bicker, eleven years younger than himself—was also of the Amsterdam patriciate, niece of the eminent burgomaster Cornelis de Graeff and the brothers Bicker, wealthy merchants of corn, fur, and silk. For the wedding, the poet Vondel wrote some lines, and for a few weeks the diligent young pensionary put aside affairs of state.

The merchant-aristocrats with whom De Witt was now closely tied imposed a lasting influence on Dutch society, manners, and architecture. For them, the stately town houses rose along three great new Amsterdam canals—Her-

Over the States-General, in this 1651 view by Dirck van Delen, hang Spanish flags taken in the liberation wars.

rengracht, Keizergracht, and Prinsengracht—while for the lesser burghers who emulated them, smaller but similar houses were built on the streets running between. The term "regents" denoted the trustees, or syndics, of guilds, charitable organizations, and almshouses; as time went on, the regents married into and absorbed the old nobility, and gradually became a self-perpetuating caste, favoring their own relatives for positions within their oligarchies. De Witt, no exception, got his brother appointed governor of Putten, his father a post on the Chamber of Accounts, and numerous cousins various other government positions. But he also refused favors to those he thought lacking in merit. De Witt's father once said of the ordinary middle class, "The burgher is a small fellow, and must be kept small"; this period undoubtedly saw an increasing exclusion from government of those involved in day-to-day trade. Invested riches supported the regents, whose houses and dress became less plain. And though some regent families might still frown on conspicuous display, a peek into their linen cupboards showed riches aplenty: Burgomaster Van Beveren's inventory listed 40 pairs of drawers, 150 shirts, 150 collars, 154 ruffled cuffs, 154 handkerchiefs, 60 hats, 92 nightcaps, 20 dressing gowns, 12 nightgowns, and 35 pairs of gloves.

This massive cupboard, or *kabinet*, apart from its contents, was the most prized item in Dutch households; a combined wardrobe and safe, it was decorated with inlays and ornate carving. Solid furnishings and good proportions were requisites of the well-to-do Dutch. Look, for example, at the details of Delft houses in Vermeer: a handsomely tiled floor; damask cloth on the table; brass candelabra; good oak benches and chairs, with copper nails to fasten the leather or velvet upholstery; and on the walls numerous paintings, tapestries, maps of Europe, and mirrors perhaps reflecting virginals at which young women might be seated. In the kitchen, copper and pewter pots hung on the walls, the floor was marble-tiled, there was a copper or marble sink fed by a pump, and sometimes even a copper tank for hot water, heated by a stove in the immense hearth. French visitors thought these houses lacked comfort. Peat, the common fuel, did not throw out much heat, and as the quantity of Burgomaster Van Beveren's underwear perhaps indicates, everyone had to wear several layers of clothing against the cold, even in bed.

The regents' government created a republic that Plato might have approved, ruled by an aristocracy of leading men. The great majority of people, though excluded from power, were satisfied with policies that avoided military entanglements of a kind the House of Orange might involve them in. The oligarchy of the regents seemed preferable to the monarchal autocracy prevalent elsewhere in Europe. What the regents trumpeted as the System of True Liberty may sound an ironic note to the modern ear, but it received wide support, particularly from those citizens, not keen members of the Reformed Calvinist faith, who believed that the regents protected them from Reformed intolerance. This support enabled the regents to demand what Sir William Temple termed "the most cruel hardship and variety of taxes that was ever known under any government." Temple noted that the Dutch were willing to bear these impositions—high excise duties, indirect taxes, and an income tax of one per cent—because they saw that the money went for the public good: "No great riches are

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De Witt takes the grand pensionary's seat of office.

On the death in 1650 of the seminonarchal stadholder, William II of Orange, the delegates to the States-General decided to do without a stadholder, leaving the regents supreme. In 1653 the States of Holland elected Jan de Witt grand pensionary, an office he is seen accepting in the engraving above. As head of the country's greatest province, De Witt virtually ruled the United Provinces and dominated the States-General, which met in the Binnenhof, opposite, in the Dutch capital, The Hague, at right.

ROYAL LIBRARY, STOCKHOLM

Stately houses line the canals of The Hague in this detail from an engraving of 1615.

seen to enter by public payments into private purses, either to raise families, or to feed the prodigal expenses of vain, extravagant, and luxurious men—all public monies are applied to the safety, greatness, or honour of the State, and the magistrates themselves bear an equal share in all the burdens they impose." Moreover, these leaders were not out of the people's reach. Temple noted how De Witt often walked in the streets, and during the Anglo-Dutch crisis of 1654, when his responsibilities were heavy, he was to be found talking politics at the kermis, or fair, in front of a pancake stall.

Pieter de la Court, a Dutch economic and political theorist, pointed out some of the factors making for Dutch success in *The True Interest and Political Maxims of the Republic of Holland* (1662): their great enthusiasm for free trade; their location at a strategic geographic crossroads; their network of inland waterways; their political institutions and religious freedom; the recent great increase in population, and immigration from the southern Netherlands; and also, such natural disadvantages as boggy land and floods, which forced people into trade, fishing, and industry. Cheap money was another factor in Dutch prosperity—Amsterdam was Wall Street and Lombard Street combined, its bank the envy of the financial world. De Witt, as managing director of the United Provinces, was himself a distinguished financier: he reduced the interest on the vast foreign debt from 5 to 4 per cent (thus saving Holland alone two million florins a year), built up the republic's credit, and created a reserve for times of need. He thought in personal terms, too, finding time to write one of the first books on life insurance.

The insurance he attempted to provide for his own country in these years depended mostly on what, for a seventeenth-century European statesman, was a fairly novel policy of peace. He had come to office during the first of three Anglo-Dutch wars in a quarter of a century, and though his initial move was to encourage the Dutch fleet to break the English blockade, his next was to negotiate a successful peace with Cromwell's government, involving the exclusion of Charles I's grandson William from the stadholdership. The Dutch had further interests in the Baltic, where they sided with the Danes against the Swedes, and in the southern Spanish Netherlands, which the French had designs on. Fortunately, the great powers had been preoccupied with problems of their own: civil war in England; the Thirty Years' War in Germany; religious strife in France and a feud with the Hapsburgs; general decline in Spain. The regents, thinking defensively, reduced the Dutch armies—largely mercenary troops—and thus made no demands on the potential military leadership of the House of Orange.

The sea, however, was a different matter. Dutch ships carried more goods than the ships of all other European countries together, and the Dutch navy was needed to maintain the supremacy of the seas. Dutch vessels were recognized as better built; both the Swedes and the Danes fitted out their fleets in Amsterdam before fighting each other. The Dutch gave their marine vocabulary to the English—words such as jib and yacht—and in the Baltic, Dutch was the lingua franca. The Dutch traded cleverly, not only to provision themselves, but to sell for more elsewhere: "They buy infinitely," Sir William observed, "but 'tis to sell again." They made long

Dutch and English warships fight it out in a four-day North Sea battle in June, 1666, in this painting by Abraham Storck.

voyages of exploration, founded one empire in America, most of which they soon lost to the English and the Portuguese, and another in the East Indies, which they maintained and expanded.

Certainly the greatest European admiral of the century was the Provinces' De Ruyter, who swept out his own cabin, kept his own chickens, and, on visits to The Hague, often stayed with the De Witts. But the sea was in the blood of most Dutchmen, including that of the grand pensionary. His energetic leadership was as effective on shipboard as in the council chamber. On several occasions he went on voyages with the fleet, to the amazement of his colleagues who were aware of the discomforts of ships and the hell of sea battle. Boreel, a fellow deputy, declared, "He doesn't know what fear is." After the Dutch were defeated off Lowestoft, De Witt's confidence was inspiring. D'Estrades, the French ambassador, wrote to Louis XIV, "I saw M. de Witt immediately after the battle. I found him as proud and collected as ever. He told me that he was going to the Texel, by order of the States, to recompense some and punish others, and hoped soon to be able to send the fleet to sea again. . . ."

At Texel, where the veteran seamen claimed that the south-southwest breeze made it impossible to get out to sea, De Witt assumed command, sounded the passage, and took two of the biggest ships out through the Spaniards-gat; the fleet followed. In 1666, when De Ruyter was ill, he took the fleet down channel, looking for the English, but storms and sickness forced his return. The following year he planned the famous expedition into the Thames, on which his brother Cornelis sailed with De Ruyter. Finding the British fleet up the Medway, the Dutch sank and set fire to many of their ships and, as a crowning insult, towed the eighty-gun flagship *Royal Charles* back to Holland. The brothers De Witt were heroes; for the moment, the popular yearning for glory fostered by the House of Orange was appeased.

By the late 1660's the Dutch were conscious of living in a unique place in a unique time. Having beaten Spain, they now added the satisfaction of curtailing the aggressions of France and England through naval strength and a firm, cautious diplomacy. And to foreigners like Temple, Holland was immensely appealing; its towns were strong, its countryside beautiful: one had a feeling of security, of well-being, of living in "a kinder and a softer climate."

Certain attributes that we now think of as particularly Dutch came to flower at this time. One was cleanliness—as a characteristic of houses, if not of the human body. Huizinga ascribed it to the hygienic requirements of cheese making, but Temple thought the cause was "the extreme moisture of the air. . . . For without the help of those customs, their country would not be habitable by such crowds of people, but air would corrupt upon every hot season, and expose the inhabitants to general and infectious diseases." To illustrate the Dutch mania for cleanliness, Sir William told the story of a burgomaster who paid a call at a fellow burgher's house. The maidservant who answered the door spotted some mud on the visitor's shoes and, without a word, picked him up bodily, marched across two rooms with him, and dumped him at the foot of the stairs. There she removed his shoes and said, "The mistress will be pleased to see you."

Dutchwomen didn't excite Temple: "They live with very general good fame, a certain sort of chastity being heredi-

BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE SERVICE PHOTOGRAPHIQUE

De Witt, at center, leads the Dutch fleet out to fight off Texel Island.

Jan's older brother, Cornelis de Witt

Three times during De Witt's nineteen years in power, Dutch and English rivalry over colonies and seaborne commerce erupted into warfare. The second Anglo-Dutch War (1665–67) was marked by fierce clashes such as the one at left, in which the Dutch admiral, De Ruyter, routed a huge English fleet. De Witt himself took an active part in the war: above, he leads the windbound Dutch warships out to sea to do battle. His brother Cornelis, right, accompanied De Ruyter on an expedition in June, 1667, that culminated in the daring raid up the Medway in which the Dutch seized the English flagship.

tary and habitual among them." French visitors, however, felt that Dutchwomen were repressed because they found their own men cool and preoccupied with business matters; but once you got to know them, they were remarkably free. A Parisian saying of the time—"to make love like a Dutchwoman"—certainly suggests that the basic machinery of life in the Netherlands was in good working order.

Any backwardness in this respect was made up for by heavy drinking. "It may be necessary," Temple speculated, "to thaw and move the frozen or inactive spirits of the brain." Perhaps because the quality of their drinking water was so dubious, beer was consumed at all meals, and between meals. Foreigners were amazed at the size of the wine glasses used at the frequent guild banquets and drinking bouts where, with great ceremony, people got very drunk. Although the upper classes weren't seen much in the taverns, they monopolized the consumption of Holland's own gin, or *genever,* in considerable production at the Schiedam distilleries by 1660. Tea was taken up in the 1640's, at first as an expensive remedy for fever. Patricians were accustomed to sampling the costly leaves in the privacy of their homes, perhaps with a few close friends. The use of tea spread from the upper classes to the bourgeoisie in the 1670's, and the price gradually fell, but tea-drinking remained a cult: pearl-studded tea tables were set up in special rooms given over to its consumption; varieties of tea were discussed like wine vintages; and different methods of drinking it were debated.

The De Witt years also saw the arrival of coffee as a fashionable beverage for the late morning. Hot chocolate was already in vogue in court circles at The Hague. As for tobacco, the historian Paul Zumthor writes that "People smoked everywhere, at home, at the office, in the shops and inns, in the stage coaches and barges—even in church, sometimes. The entire Netherlands stank of tobacco." But there were also other, less obnoxious social innovations: private postal services; newsheets and gazettes; municipal street lighting and fire hoses. Some streets in Amsterdam were made one-way to cope with the ever thickening traffic of carriages, wagons, and freight sleds.

The Dutch temperament—and the drinking habits, too—meant frequent brawls in taverns and at kermises; but the Dutch also had enlightened legislation that appointed arbitrators for disputes, thus avoiding court action. Essentially God-fearing, the Dutch were—Temple thought—a nation with "so little show of parts, and of wit, and so great evidence of wisdom and prudence." Another paradox lay in their simultaneous belief in conformity and toleration of those who were nonconformists. Temple describes how the troubles elsewhere in Europe served to increase "the swarm in this country, not only by such as were persecuted at home, but great numbers of peaceable men, who came here to seek for quiet in their lives, and safety in their possessions or trades...." In Leyden, Brewster, Bradford, Robinson, and their followers had found shelter; royal personages, such as Charles II, were taken in; and so were scholars like the Czech teacher Comenius, and Descartes. Even Catholics, who made up a third of the population, were allowed to worship as long as the act wasn't too obvious. They weren't supposed to hold office or serve in the professions, but many did.

Another freedom the regents maintained was the right to express one's

William III, Prince of Orange, in 1671

When French troops overran Dutch soil in June, 1672, the people clamored for the return to power of their traditional leaders, the House of Orange. William III, above, was made captain-general of the Dutch forces; Cornelis de Witt, falsely accused of threatening the prince's life, was imprisoned; and Jan de Witt resigned as grand pensionary. On August 20 a mob assembled, right, outside the jail where Jan had gone to see Cornelis; then, dragging the brothers out, the mob viciously attacked them both, far right.

While militiamen watch, a pro-Orange mob menaces Jan de

thoughts. De Witt and his colleagues befriended—among other thinkers of the time—Baruch Spinoza, for whom they managed to arrange an annual allowance of several hundred florins. Though Spinoza was expelled from his Amsterdam synagogue for heresy and had to publish under an assumed name, he recognized how much better things were in Holland than elsewhere. In his *Tractatus* of 1670 he wrote: "We have the rare felicity of living in a state where entire freedom of opinion prevails, where all may worship God in their own fashion, and where nothing is held sweeter, nothing more precious than such liberty." Many of the regents realized that they had in Holland one of the great men of the age; some supported him with cash, and at his death, patricians in carriages followed the hearse of the philosopher and lens-grinder to his grave.

In thought and science, advances took place on a broad front—in medicine, in printing and publishing, in university life. The botanical garden at Leyden produced valuable medicinal herbs. Anatomy lessons, such as Dr. Tulp's, painted by Rembrandt, fostered a more accurate knowledge of the human body. Great strides were made in mathematics—in logarithmic, integral, and differential calculus. Christian Huygens developed the pendulum clock, more accurate than any before and invaluable for navigation; and through well-made Dutch lenses he first saw the rings of Saturn. In Delft, the great amateur Van Leeuwenhoek looked through his microscopes and became the first to see various bacteria, rainwater protozoa, and the spermatozoa of men and sheep. Students flocked to Leyden University from all over Europe. Every professor and student there was allowed, free of excise duty, forty-five gallons of wine a year and half a barrel of beer per month, an added incentive for the distinguished scholars invited to the university; Galileo didn't accept, but Scaliger did. Among Leyden's students were Descartes, Sir Thomas Browne, John Evelyn —and, later, Jonathan Swift's Lemuel Gulliver.

It was a time when people read books and bought pictures. Amsterdam was the biggest book market in Europe, and John Evelyn remarked on the quantity of pictures for sale at fairs. One edition of the popular, preachy poems of Jakob Cats, grand pensionary before De Witt, had sold fifty thousand copies by 1655. But Vondel, recognized as a writer of eloquent poetic dramas, had to make a living as a minor clerk. Although he admired De Witt immensely and wrote verses glorifying him, De Witt hardly noticed Vondel. Nor is there any indication that De Witt was aware he shared his time with artists we think of as the glory of seventeenth-century Holland. A letter to a painter survives, which the historian Bernard Vlekke calls "painfully haughty and condescending."

But, if De Witt didn't manifest any great awareness of that aspect of his world, he maintained the Holland in which such things were possible, in which the art of painting flourished as never before, or since, in so small a space, among so few people. His invigorating effect was to be seen in the multitude of works produced in those years. His love of his country was mirrored in the Dutch painters' desire to portray that country and its people: its lakes, its ships, its merchants, its poor, its boisterous moments and its thoughtful ones, its old men leaning on staffs and its young women dreamily reading love letters, its parades of swank, its

Witt outside his brother's prison.

BOTH: BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE SERVICE PHOTOGRAPHIQUE

The mob slays the De Witt brothers before stringing up their dismembered limbs for public display.

table tops covered with fine objects, its little yards, its streets, its houses, its clouds, its low horizons. The Dutch painters had no great patrons—no cathedral triptychs to paint, few huge walls to decorate. But they had thousands of front rooms and parlors that suddenly required paintings. Nothing grand: "Holland's glorious simplicity" was Constantijn Huygens's phrase. In fact, it was this simplicity—perceived with the intense curiosity of Vermeer—that becomes the greatest mystery.

Of course, the word "simplicity" does no justice to Rembrandt. He often defied prevailing taste, being impossibly theatrical and exotic: he was altogether too much for the officers of the militia company, who asked him for a group portrait, and too much for the burghers of Amsterdam, who certainly hadn't expected anything like that one-eyed barbaric chieftain, rebel against the Romans. Yet something in the portraits, the self-portraits, the merest scribble, or in the painstaking beauty of such etchings as *The Hundred Guilder Print,* reveals a sense of human individuality, of what it is to be alive, capable of love and fear and passion. It is this contact with day-to-day life that evokes an abiding interest in Jan de Witt's Holland.

Here was the first middle-class state—without a monarch, without an inquisition; with no democracy as yet, but possessing a good deal of freedom, care, and concern. Temple was impressed that the Dutch "argue without interest or anger; they differ without enmity or scorn. . . . Men live together, like citizens of the world, associated by the common ties of humanity, and by the bonds of peace, under the impartial protection of indifferent laws, with equal encouragement of all arts and industry, and equal freedom of speculation and inquiry." He was impressed by Dutch charity, particularly the old people's homes, the *hofje* courtyards of small brick cottages in which the elderly could live on their own but in sheltered circumstances. Some of the greatest "regent paintings" are those Frans Hals painted of the patrician men and women who were trustees of such homes: *The Regents of the St. Elizabeth's Hospital* (circa 1641), for example, and *The Regentesses of the Old Men's Home* (circa 1664)—the latter a very monochromatic picture, full of firmness, goodwill, and rather earnest good manners. To some historians, this quality—which the Dutch call *deftige,* a mixture of coolness, haughtiness, and paternalism—was by no means an unmixed blessing. Vlekke believed that Jan de Witt was the ideal *deftigé* burgher, but that "to be *deftige* became the ambition of the whole Dutch middle class of the next two hundred and fifty years, and from this general ambition Netherland society suffered until 1940. This deliberate snobbery impaired the magnificent growth of Netherland culture." As time went on, the "regents' mentality"—bolstered by wealth from the Indies, by investment rather than action—produced something ingrown, constrained, claustrophobic.

Perhaps there were already precursors of that suffocating atmosphere in the last years of De Witt's regime. After running smoothly for nearly a generation, the System of True Liberty began to crack from internal and external pressures. De Witt's authority so overshadowed that of his employers, the States of Holland, that resentful mutterings were heard even in patrician ranks. Moreover, the young Prince of Orange was growing up and attracting the old loyalties—bringing together, as no one else

could, the various antiregent elements. De Witt had tried to insure that, as a "child of state," William would grow up free of English influence; for a while he himself taught William several hours a day, and said he was fond of the boy. But his attempts to keep the growing lad from the posts once rightfully held by his Orange predecessors lacked his usual finesse. William must have resented the excuses with which his advancement was constantly put off; and even De Witt acknowledged that the popular demand for William—whose father had once imprisoned *his* father—was "a rising fire that will not be kept back." From De Witt's point of view, William's marriage to a Stuart princess, which put him in line of succession to the British throne, increased the dangers of monarchal power overwhelming the liberties of the republic, and further entangled the young prince in the machinations between Charles II and Louis XIV.

De Witt had done a brilliant job of navigating the Dutch ship of state through tricky waters, but now, as the historian Pieter Geyl wrote, he had to steer between Scylla and Charybdis, between English commercial expansionism and the territorial aggrandizement of France. After the brilliant Medway raid by the Dutch, Charles II, backed by English commercial interests, wanted revenge. Louis XIV wanted glory and land—particularly in the southern Netherlands. On May 1, 1670, the secret treaty of Dover was signed, agreeing to a joint attack on the United Provinces. Within two years the English contrived for war to break out for the third time between themselves and the Dutch, and the armies of France invaded the republic.

Now internal problems came home to roost. De Witt had urged reinforced defenses, but the provinces had been slow to agree; new taxes were imposed and bitterly resisted. And the diffusion of responsibility among the various provinces, each supporting its own troops, proved to have intractable disadvantages. Louis's armies advanced, but no effective common cause was made against them until the invaders reached the traditional defenses of flooded land around the cities of Holland. Louis reached Utrecht; his fleet and the English navy threatened the coast.

In this crisis the Dutch turned from De Witt and the regents to their traditional military leaders, the House of Orange. Blind to De Witt's difficulties, the public saw only the regents' failure to keep out the invaders. Moreover, young William III wasn't inclined to sympathize with the oligarchy that had so long excluded him from the offices of stadholder and captain-general. In some towns, the crisis produced panic, and panic bred violence: there were riots in The Hague, and even in Dordrecht cries of "Down with De Witt!" were raised.

On June 21, 1672, the day Utrecht fell to the French, four men attempted to assassinate the grand pensionary in The Hague. His wife—"the dear and worthy commander of my home," he had once called her—had died in 1668, leaving him with three daughters and two sons, and now, while he lay at home recovering from the attack, his regime collapsed in a vacuum of confidence. His brother Cornelis was arrested on dubious charges, tried, tortured, and, though not found guilty, kept in prison. (In a time of contagious cowardice among the magistrate class, De Ruyter was one of the few who had the guts to express his sympathy with Cornelis de Witt, his former shipmate.) Jan de Witt resigned on August 4, making no complaint against the States of Holland, who were now eager to let him go.

His friends advised him to flee, but he wouldn't. On the afternoon of August 20, 1672, a mob formed outside the prison where he was visiting his brother. Three militia companies were called. After holding off the mob for a while, two of the companies were sent away on a false report of peasant riots outside the city. The weak-kneed officials failed to control the crowd's fury, and, led by a goldsmith named Verhoeff, himself a militiaman, the mob invaded the prison. Cornelis lay in bed; Jan sat reading the Bible to him. They were dragged from the room, and Cornelis was thrown down the stairs, beaten with clubs, and stabbed with pikes. Outside, the brothers took each other's hands, but were driven apart. Cornelis, mortally wounded, died first. Then (in the words of the Dutch historian Petrus Blok), Jan, "with his cloak over his head, ran into the ranks of Verhoeff's company and was first hit by a pistol shot fired close to him and finished by clubs and musket shots. At half past four all was over and the madmen, drunk with bloodshed, danced on the bodies which were finally hung up by the feet to the lamppost on the Groene Zoodje, horribly mutilated, even cut to pieces by desperadoes desirous of a bloody relic."

It was an indication of the savagery that Dutch civilization still contained; Spinoza, saddened, called it *ultimi barbarorum*. The offenders were not punished; some took refuge with the armies of the prince, who now proceeded with De Ruyter to hold off the English and French. But many Hollanders felt it was a black moment in their history, as did the grand pensionary's good friend, the former English ambassador. De Witt, Sir William wrote, "deserved another fate, and a better return from his country, after eighteen years spent in their ministry, without any care of his entertainments or ease, and little of his fortune. A man of unwearied industry, inflexible constancy, sound, clear, and deep understanding, with untainted integrity; so that whenever he was blinded, it was by the passion he had for that which he esteemed the good and interest of his state." De Witt was the last Dutch statesman to meet such an end at the hands of his countrymen. In that respect, it was De Witt's system for peace and the patrician code that triumphed.

Anthony Bailey has written for HORIZON *on such diverse species as René Dubos (flourishing) and the dodo (extinct). He is also the author of the* Horizon Concise History of the Low Countries, *published in 1972.*

The Dutch at Home

THE CINCINNATI ART MUSEUM, GIFT OF MARY HANNA

Outside an imposing country house, the ladies and gentlemen above are playing, as the title of Pieter de Hooch's painting indicates, *A Game of Skittles*. The year is 1665 and the place near Amsterdam, where De Hooch was then working. Throughout the turbulent Dutch Golden Age the home remained the tranquil focus of family life wherein the Dutch took their pleasures: reading books from the busy Amsterdam presses; drinking gin or beer, wine or tea; making music. Genre painters like De Hooch depicted these domestic scenes for their bourgeois patrons, compiling an amazingly complete record of everyday life in the years of their country's greatest glory.

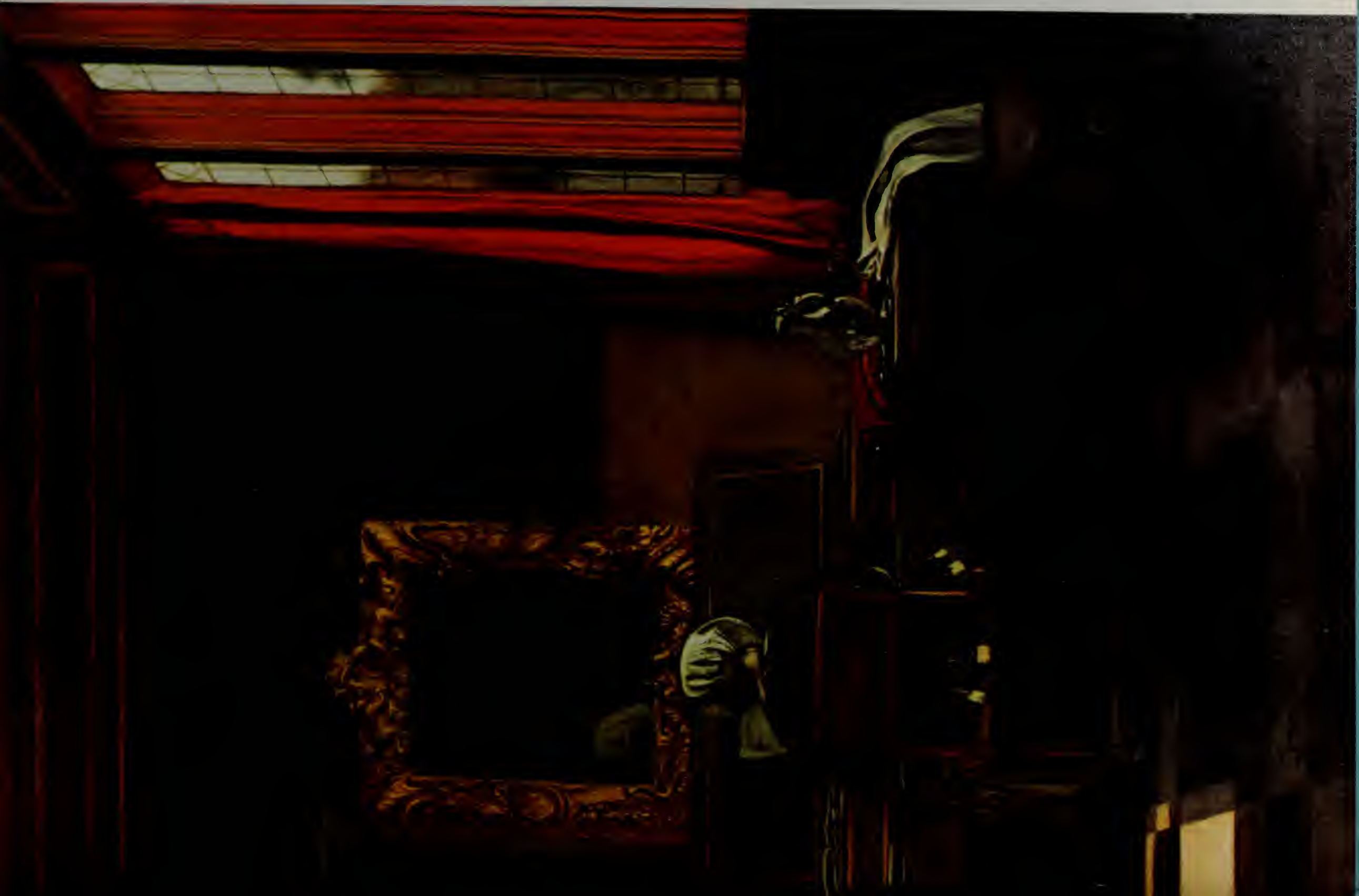
RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM; OPPOSITE: SAME

ABOVE: In De Hooch's *Interior*, painted about 1665, the mistress of the house receives a messenger while her child waits to go fishing—presumably in the Kloveniersburgwal outside the door, a canal running through a fashionable district of Amsterdam.

OPPOSITE: In the background of *The Small Country House*, also by De Hooch, a servant scours a pan. Cleaning was a constant Dutch preoccupation: "Their houses they keep cleaner than their bodies," an Englishman observed; "their bodies than their souls."

OVERLEAF: By early morning light, a woman plays a virginal in a painting by the Amsterdam artist Emmanuel de Witte. In a corner of the room a man, barely visible, peers sleepily out from behind bedcurtains, while in a distant room a maid sweeps up. The house is rather large by Dutch standards, and its furnishings - brass chandelier, gilded mirror frame, Persian carpet—suggest that its owner, who is perhaps a merchant, is comfortably wealthy.

BOYMANS-VAN BEUNINGEN MUSEUM, ROTTERDAM



STADELSCHES KUNSTINSTITUT, FRANKFURT – BLAUEL; OPPOSITE: THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS, PURCHASE, THE MRS. EDSEL B. FORD, RALPH A. BOOTH, AND FOUNDERS SOCIETY GENERAL FUNDS

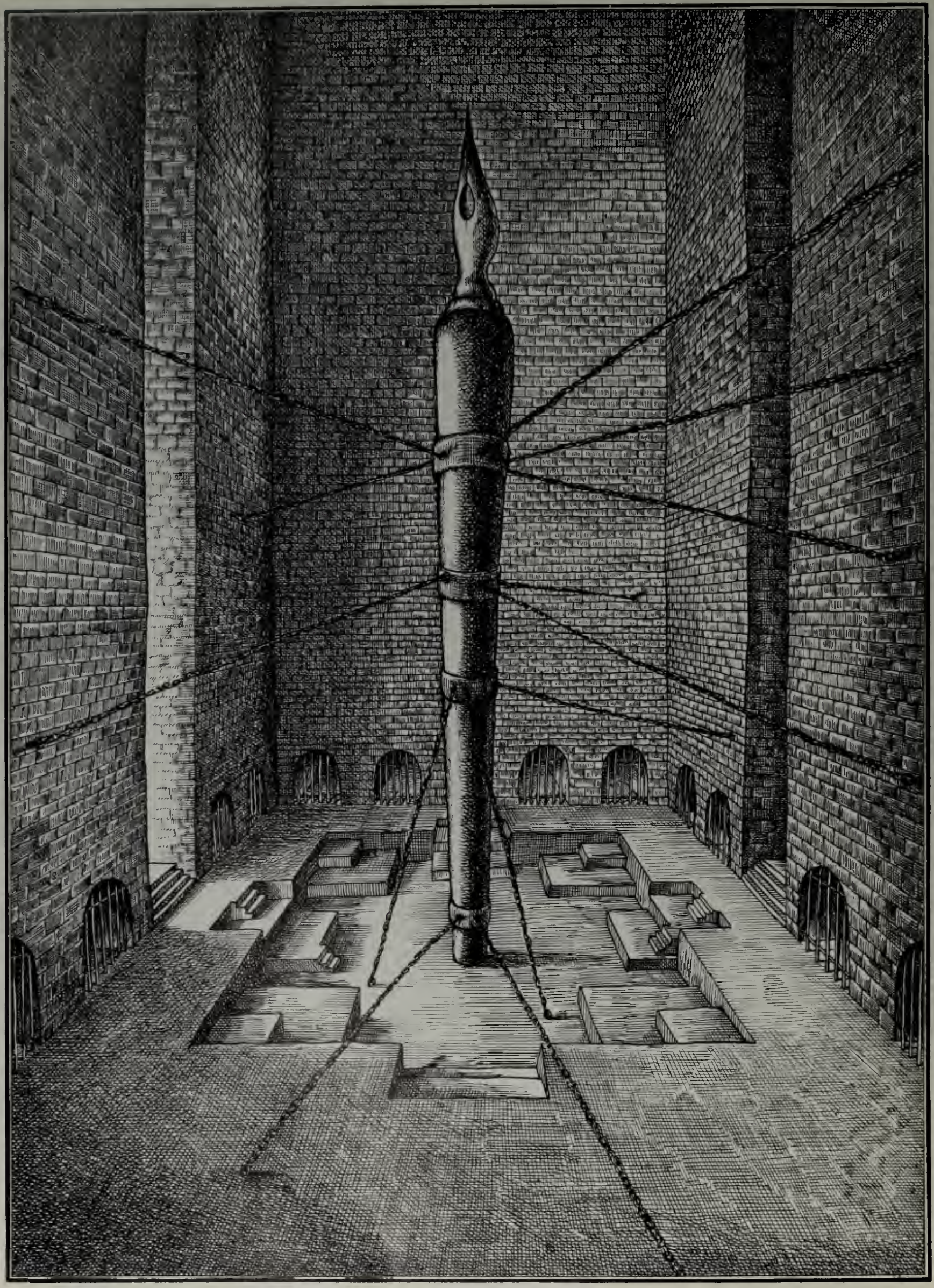
ABOVE: Dividers in hand, the eponymous subject of *The Geographer,* by Jan Vermeer, stares off into space. In fact, the painting is mistitled: this man's chart shows, not land and sea, but stars, while the globe behind him is not terrestrial, but celestial.

OPPOSITE: The central figure in Gerard Ter Borch's *A Lady at Her Toilet* finishes dressing for a party with the help of her maid, who laces her bodice. Her elegant gown recalls the rage for French fashions that prevailed among the well-to-do Dutch.

OVERLEAF: An entire family, grouped in front of portraits of ancestors that were probably painted by Frans Hals but are now lost, has gathered for an at-home recital in this painting by Jan Miense Molenaar. In addition to the theme of music, with its evanescence, certain details point to the fleetingness of time and the brevity of life: the soap bubbles blown by the boy, the clock on the wall, and even, indeed, the ancestral portraits.

FRANS HALSMUSEUM, HAARLEM

EUGENI MIHAESCO



The Trial of Julius Háy

In the wake of the 1956 revolution, Hungary's greatest living playwright was tried, convicted, and jailed. Why?

An Introduction by Arthur Koestler

On the third day of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 "some farm wagons drew up in front of the Writers' Union. They brought gifts of food: bread, lard, live geese, whole carcasses of pig—in the midst of the starving city. These peasants had come to seek the writers out: it was for them that the otherwise hardly openhanded villagers had donated all these delicacies. Writers and peasants!"

It is a fact—which sounds strange if not incredible to Western ears—that the most dramatic popular uprising in postwar history had been initiated by a handful of writers: novelists, playwrights, journalists, literary critics. Several factors contributed to this apparent paradox. One is the fundamental difference between the role played by intellectuals in Western democracies on the one hand, and in the various despotisms, past and present, in Central and Eastern Europe on the other. The Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines the term "intelligentsia" as "the part of the nation (esp. the Russian) that aspires to independent thinking." Where there is freedom of speech, everybody can "think independently" to his heart's content, and there is no particular virtue attached to it; nor are intellectuals held in high esteem. But where opinions are regimented, whether it be czarist Russia or the Hungary of 1956, every independent voice, if it succeeds in making itself heard, carries an explosive potential. Hence the deep, reverberating echoes of Pasternak, a Solzhenitsyn—or of the voice of the Hungarian Writers' Union during that Budapest summer full of hope and promise.

There had been a thaw—one of those periodic thaws which precede a new ice age. Stalin was dead, and his successor had denounced him as a criminal maniac; Matyas Rakosi, Hungary's little Stalin, had been demoted; some of his victims were released from jail; others, who had been hanged, were posthumously rehabilitated. The air was full of great expectations—as if, after a terrible drought, the first clouds had at long last appeared over the horizon. But those clouds were still thin, diffuse—they needed seeding to condense and yield their vital moisture. There was no legal opposition party to fulfill that task, no independent trade union, no free press. There were only two organizations of the intelligentsia, harmless in appearance, tolerated by the regime as a safety valve, that were allowed to indulge in a certain amount of "independent thinking"—within the framework of Communist ideology. One was the Writers' Union and their weekly *Little Journal*, the other the "Petöfi Circle" of students and academics. Between them—perhaps to their own surprise—they provided the required seeding that triggered the cloudburst. What started as a monologue of disgruntled littérateurs became within a few weeks a dialogue with the nation which brought first the workers, then the kolkhoz peasants into the revolutionary camp. Hence the bread, pigs, and geese that the rustics brought to the Writers' Union as a token of their common fight against an intolerably repressive regime.

It was a glorious episode in the history of the European intelligentsia, which, unavoidably, ended in a blood bath. One of the major actors in the tragedy was Julius Háy, Hungary's most prominent playwright—and a devoted Communist who had proudly carried his party card since the first Hungarian Commune of 1919 without ever getting tarnished by the corrosive atmosphere of intrigue, denunciation, and sycophancy that dominated Stalin's Brave New World. His immunity against corruption was derived from a kind of sleepwalking innocence, a complete lack of personal ambition—except the one guiding passion to see his plays produced by a perfect cast, under a perfect director. He was at eighteen, and still is at seventy-four, the romantic type of revolutionary who would have felt more at home in the last century—on the barricades of 1848—than being "Born 1900." This dreamy aloofness seems to have protected him not only against the perversions of party life, but also against the more savage forms of persecution by the twin monsters of Gestapo and GPU. He survived the beginning of the Nazi regime in Berlin, the Great Purge of the thirties in Moscow, and Rakosi's terror years in Budapest rather like a fire walker unscathed—until the unavoidable fate of a romantic revolutionary born 1900 caught up with him at the age of

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fifty-seven. He was arrested, together with other writers who had taken an active part in the revolution, and after a secret trial — a farce performed behind closed doors to save some appearance of legality — was sentenced: six years of prison and confiscation of all his possessions. It was, by eastern standards, still a mild sentence: what saved Háy, and other writers, from the gallows was a storm of international protests, with signatories ranging from conservatives to left-wingers, including eminent European Communists.

Háy's principal crime was a literary creation—Comrade Kucsera, a satire on the jackbooted party boss, "the bureaucrat in the seat of power, the exploiter of our society. . . .

"I really do not like Comrade Kucsera—and I have my reasons. Nor does Comrade Kucsera have any liking for me. For that, too, there is a reason. . . .

"Kucsera is the great mistake in our History. Kucsera is the know-nothing by conviction and passion, who looks down on us from the pedestal of his ignorance and clings fanatically to the fallacious principle of the permanent sharpening of the class struggle. . . .

"There is no room in History for both Kucsera and us. We have to choose: either Kucsera or humanity. In Kucsera's eyes a lie is not a lie, murder not murder, law not law, man not man. . . ."

This incendiary article, under the headline "Why I Don't Like Comrade Kucsera," was published in the *Literary Journal* on October 6, 1956, on the day when the bones of László Rajk —the former hero of the party, hanged by Rakosi in 1949, now rehabilitated—were disinterred and reinterred again after a solemn state funeral. Literally overnight, "Comrade Kucsera" became a household word, like Scrooge or Tartuffe, a national symbol for the little Neros who ruled the country. When the demonstrating masses filled the streets of Budapest on October 23, many of their banners read, "Down with the Kucseras!" Rarely has a writer had such proof of the power of his pen.

The glory was short-lived. Less than a fortnight later the Russian tanks returned to Budapest and crushed the revolution under their tracks—Kucsera's juggernauts had the last word. But the last voice of the dying revolution, a strangled cry for help heard all over the world, was Julius Háy's. On the morning of November 4, while the tanks rumbled into the capital, he and his wife rushed to the radio station in the parliament building, which was not yet occupied by the Russians, and sent out a touching appeal to rouse the conscience of the world:

"To all writers of the world, to all scientists, academics and leaders of cultural life; help us! Time is short. You know the facts. I don't have to explain them! Help the Hungarian people! Help the Hungarian writers, scientists, workers, peasants, and intellectuals! Help! Help! Help!"

Then Julius and Eva Háy went home and waited. They could still have found a way to cross the Austrian border, as tens of thousands did. Instead, Háy decided to stay and share the fate of his country—hoping against hope that the fall of the curtain was not final, that it would rise again for the second act with a happy finale that would inaugurate the program of the revolution, the utopia of "Communism with a human face." That, too, may be called a quixotic gesture—but without that gaunt knight and his avatars, the world would be even poorer than it is.

A Memoir by Julius Háy

The police raid did not come as a complete surprise. For weeks before we were plagued with anonymous telephone calls, day and night, often ten or fifteen times in rapid succession. With a series of choice obscenities and dire threats, our callers attempted to throw us off balance. It was obvious that things were not going to stop there.

Great emphasis was placed upon the legality of the proceedings—at least as regarded form—and the men duly produced a search warrant. They had hauled my neighbor, Dr. Dubay, out of bed, and since two people must witness a search they also called in the concierge's wife. In pajamas and a warm dressing gown the old doctor sat shivering on the bottom step of my bookshelf ladder, like the prophet Jeremiah in my grandmother's big illustrated Bible.

Under the aegis of the law I was permitted to kiss my wife farewell, even if we were so closely surrounded by seven secret policemen that we had to breathe their very breath. Then two of the men took me between them and led me away. The other five stayed on to search the flat. What they hoped to find were secret documents of the Writers' Union, but no such documents existed, either in my flat or anywhere else.

After a seven-hour search they finally left the flat and sent the witnesses home. The old doctor, making his slow, sad way back to bed, can hardly have suspected that he would not live to see my return, nor that his own son, a doctor too, would soon disappear in the same way.

Eva was now left alone in the flat, silent, dry-eyed. She was forty years old, a woman of enchanting beauty and, since the birth of our mongoloid child, Michael, fragile health. She stood motionless in the middle of our living room for a long, long time—as if gradually losing all sense of time's passage. She thought about Michael, who she knew was well looked after at his special school. She thought about Peter, whom we had managed to send off to his grandparents in London a few days before. She thought of me and of herself, and of our inseparability—which this brutal separation had for the first time made complete. She looked round the room, selected a corner of the sofa, and sat down in the attitude that was to be for her the attitude of waiting, through unnumbered hours and innumerable days. There she sat, neither weeping nor sleeping, all through the night.

Next morning some men appeared in our street with a lorry and a saw and killed the old lime tree because it blocked the view into our windows. A man began cleaning his shoes at a window of the house opposite—and went on, and on, and on. . . . He was clearly either a shoe fetishist or a totally unimaginative spy who could think of nothing else to do at the window.

While I was being kept under observation round the clock through the peephole in the door of my cell, Eva, too, had to suffer day and night the feeling of being watched.

The true heroes of the time of waiting were our women. During our imprisonment I lost my ninety-year-old mother, Tibor Déry his mother, who was even older, and Zoltán Zelk his wife. I was not able to see Eva until six months after my arrest, and when we did at last meet it was at the headquarters of the AVO, the secret police, with my usual interrogating officer taking part in the conversation. Even later on, our meetings were so few and far between that on one occasion Eva went through a serious gallstone operation in the interval without my having noticed that anything was wrong. She had been forbidden to mention it, and the major had placed her in the shadow so that I should not be struck by the sudden increase in the number of her gray hairs.

Visiting day at Maria Nostra was quite different. The women began their preparations days in advance. Hairdo, manicure, a new blouse—or, if not new, at least borrowed from a friend so that it looked as if one could still afford such things. Then up at four on the day. The tram still full of yesterday's people—waiters, musicians—only now going home. The train left at a quarter to six. Since the mass visits invariably took place on Sundays, station and train were always full of women going to Maria Nostra. The railwaymen called the train the "Widows' Special." Arrival at the little town of Szob at half past eight. Five minutes later, off again up the hill in the overcrowded, overloaded little bus. Those who managed to catch the bus or at least secure a place on the running board arrived in time for roll call at nine o'clock. Women who had been shoved aside in the crush could still run up the hill and try and make the second roll call. A second bus, however, was not provided. These women were either admitted in the second group, in which case they were happy even though it meant missing the train back, or they had to wait for the next visiting day, even if this was not for another six months. The women had to line up in front of the prison in two rows and wait until they were admitted—never mind whether it was raining or snowing, or whether the temperature stood at twenty degrees below zero or a hundred in the shade.

THE PRISON

Inside the prison hall, they were lined up again at a distance of six feet from their menfolk. A shouted command—and an earsplitting din broke out. Everyone had to talk at once; one could hardly understand a word. Such was the meeting of husbands and wives, mothers and sons, sisters and brothers, often after months of separation. Afterward the waiting began again, the brooding, the quiet hoping and the silent despair. But above all the preparation for the next visit.

There was one other sort of encounter between the prisoner and his family. Each Sunday morning trusties ran from cell to cell handing each prisoner a little packet—the photographs of his wife and children. We were permitted to keep and look at these pictures of our loved ones until two o'clock in the afternoon. Then they were collected again. The same thing happened every Sunday in Maria Nostra. And every time the shaft of happiness burst through the steely armor of bureaucratic inhumanity.

The women would have found it easier to endure their fate had they been allowed to pursue their professions. For this, however, permission was given only rarely. Eva was fired from the Vig Theatre, where she had been employed for years as dramaturge. She applied for permission to work as a taxi driver. Permission was refused. Then she found a temporary job in some useless, dusty archive connected with the clothing industry. There she met our old acquaintance Gábor Péter, whom Rakosi had one day had arrested, not for his actual misdeeds, of course—for in these he was Rakosi's accomplice—but on the usual sort of trumped-up charge. On his premature release the former tailor was honored with the job of librarian to a branch of the rag trade.

Hatred and revenge were frequently associated with a quite inhuman malice. An engineer whose daughter was hanged was sent a bill for the costs of the execution. Maléter's wife applied to the party—addressing her application to Kádár—for work of no matter what kind since she was unable to feed her family. Her request was granted: the fragile, delicate young woman was found a job—at the cemetery, as a gravedigger.

Of J. H. 57-60 I am happy to be able to report that he was a quiet prisoner. He neither raged, nor wept, nor swore, nor laid about him; he did not pester his superiors with complaints and requests, and he did himself no violence. The warders naturally found him guilty of other offenses that they could barely find it in themselves to excuse. For example, the simple task of arranging paillasse and blanket on his plank bed with military precision proved completely beyond him. Such a lack of dexterity was irritating in the extreme.

Probably none of those warders was too clear as to the essence of our quarrel with the victors. We all called ourselves socialists, and most of us did so sincerely. But whereas the one camp understood by socialism a hitherto unrealized, as yet unknown order of society, the other camp saw the supremacy of the "Kucsera" class as the goal, as the realization or near realization of socialism, and bitterly persecuted as counter-revolutionary anyone who looked for something other than and better than

the dominion of that kind of bureaucracy.

One of the older warders once asked me, "What did you get a week as a writer?" I mentioned a figure that was by and large accurate. The man stood there, open-mouthed. "And you had the nerve to go on strike?" I told him we had not done it for the money.

"What for, then?"

"For the truth. Because they wanted to make us tell the world lies. And we didn't want to."

The man demanded further explanations, then spent a long time deep in thought. It was obvious he still did not understand, but from then on he stopped finding fault with the way I made my bed.

The AVO officers who interrogated us concentrated on one thing: they went all out to persuade us to call the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 a "counter-revolution." This was no empty word game—not by any means. The new government called itself "revolutionary." For a few days there had even been a back door open through which the new government might have been drawn from our revolution. This possibility was soon dropped, however, and the new government described itself as "revolutionary" without specifying which revolution it was true to.

The people did not know what to make of the description. But if it could be arranged for one or two distinguished writers to accept the term "revolutionary," the picture would become very much clearer. It would even provide the juridical basis for putting the leaders of the 1956 revolution—however makeshift that leadership might have been—on trial as "counter-revolutionaries," as "traitors to the fatherland." However, neither the police nor the party succeeded in luring even one writer worth mentioning into that kind of deal. The few that did in time show a willingness to compromise were either completely without popular recognition as writers or looked down on as worthless careerists. The editor of a trivial weekly published by the Ministry of Culture, a man who had begun by supporting the revolution, was the first to succumb. He cashed his reward really a bit too greedily: a house in what had once been the most elegant quarter of the capital, on the former Castle Hill.

THE PRISONERS

Hushi was a girl in the special section of the Budapest Reception Prison—that is, in Staff Sergeant Németh's section. For Staff Sergeant Németh, Hushi was just a number; for her fellow prisoners, however, she was a nightingale. She sang so beautifully as almost to make one forget where one was. She sang until she was forbidden to sing, and after a short silence she began to sing again. She was as lovely as an angel, even in prison garb and without make-up, although she was nothing but a fledgling streetwalker from the West Station neighborhood. I happened to catch a glimpse of her once, though this was strictly forbidden. She was surely disappointed at seeing a middle-aged prisoner and not one of the young lads who scratched clumsy little love messages for her on the wall.

Hushi was for the gallows. So were most of the young lads in the cells around her. Why? Hard to say. In Hushi's case, because of a photo. October 30 was the day on which, under cover of the national hatred of the AVO, the underworld, too, had its say for a few hours. Little whores have no objection to being photographed in the company of strong, cruel men occasionally. Hushi was supposed to have been recognized in one such group picture taken on the street with a summarily executed AVO officer in the middle; she was standing to one side, an onlooker. That was enough for the death sentence. The sentence was pronounced and read out to the accused. Hushi went on smiling and flirting with the warders, and soon we heard the nightingale singing again. She had not understood. She knew the kind of punishments a tart has to reckon with from time to time. The death sentence was not among them.

One morning her voice was suddenly different. What had happened? Had she suddenly realized what she was in for? Had she been told that President Dobi had turned down her plea for clemency? Or was she one of those who were not yet eighteen and so were below the legal age for execution? Was the next day perhaps her eighteenth birthday, and destined therefore to be her last? She had no time to sing any more. She had quickly to explain to all who wanted to hear, as well as to all who did not, how that business of the photograph had actually come about. She spoke in a rapid, high-pitched voice and kept beginning all over again: "It was like this, you see. . . ." She was no longer herself.

Next morning Hushi was hanged. Did anyone really believe in her guilt? And what of it? Who imagined that the wheels of historical change could be blocked by the promiscuous execution of nameless human beings? Executions simply for the sake of quantity—which they then, after all, never admitted to the world. A bureaucratic Saint Bartholomew's Eve.

"Aren't you Pastor Losonczy's son?"

"That's right."

Medium height, delicate, good-looking, cultivated, an extremely talented journalist. Burning eyes, a consuming passion, given to every form of exaggeration. A sacred sense of mission and with it the ability to improvise with great formal beauty—though at the risk of letting himself be carried away by his own improvisations.

Since our first meeting in 1945 the relationship between us had been governed by conflicting feelings. Was the air I brought with me from Moscow foreign to the young man nurtured in the national tradition? Possibly. But at the same time I was clearly not radical enough for him. He had evidently caught a whiff of Soviet conservatism from me. Losonczy's Marxism was of an overheated, idealistic kind. The young man remained a passionately enthusiastic Communist until his dying breath. Meanwhile he failed to notice how he came little by little under the influence of

Révai, and how Révai—soon a minister of state—sacrificed him, his secretary of state, at the first opportunity.

Géza Losonczy had first landed in jail during Rakosi's regime. Following Stalin's death, in the deceptive climate of the thaw, the Writers' Union campaigned for Géza's release. When he was out again and we stood face to face, he offered me his friendship with tears in his eyes, apologizing for any injustice he might have committed against myself and others while in power.

He was without a doubt one of the men whose vocation it would have been to give a political conception to the Hungarian revolution of 1956 under Imre Nagy's leadership. For this there was not time. There was insufficient contact between the intellectual leadership and the worker and peasant masses. It was a lack that could not be made up at the drop of a hat.

So Géza Losonczy landed in prison a second time. In the communiqué regarding the sentence and execution of four revolutionaries, including Imre Nagy and Maléter, it was stated that Géza Losonczy had died while awaiting trial. This was true. The fifth death sentence had been meant for Losonczy. But he had given the hangman the slip.

Géza was in a neighboring cell. I gathered from scraps of conversation and various noises that someone in there was refusing to take food. Passing once in the corridor, I spotted something in an open cupboard that had not been there before—a rubber tube of the kind used for forced feeding. On another occasion I took advantage of a dent in our peephole cover to look out onto the landing. Géza was just being shaved, as happened once a week. He was as thin and bony as a child, with sunken cheeks, dull, lifeless eyes, and barely the strength to sit upright on the chair.

Not many days afterward we heard the unmistakable sounds of his death agony. He was hastily disposed of. In the evening I saw one of our warders removing the now superfluous rubber tube, swearing crossly.

Before Attila Szigethy made his first suicide attempt in prison (he finally succeeded with his third) he wanted to make his confession.

Attila was not a Communist; he was one of the few men in whom I glimpsed the new democratic politician. He had great faith in Kádár. He had told me so at length on November 23, 1956, when we met for the last time in the House of Folk Art. This faith Kádár appeared to reciprocate, for he sent Attila—this was after my arrest—to represent Hungary at a congress in Sofia.

But in this case, too, it was not honest politicians that were wanted but prestigious delinquents. Attila was arrested in the provinces, where the old AVO methods had held their ground. Such humiliating maltreatment was more than his psyche could cope with, and from then on he thought only of death.

Tapping on the heating pipe, Attila asked for a priest. He found one in a cell some distance away. First asking everyone else to stand back from the heating pipe and not listen, Attila made his confession and received absolution. It was a lengthy business because the priest did not know the Morse code and they had to fall back on the long-winded prison alphabet. But they were able to finish without being caught; Attila's last wish was granted.

THE TRIAL

The court chairman was Dr. Ferenc Vida, tall, thin, about fifty, with a close-cropped, black mustache and a general appearance that, if not exactly neglected, was not exactly well groomed either.

The four assessors were laymen, three men and one woman, the latter running to chubbiness, late thirties; one of the men nearing forty, unmistakably an AVO man, leather coat; another much the same but without the leather coat; the third an elderly man in solemn black with snow-white hair, the party-veteran type. As film extras they would have struck one as well chosen if somewhat stereotyped.

They asked questions only rarely: the leather-coat man malicious and far from stupid, the other two men malicious but stupid, the woman not unaffected by the proceedings, prejudiced throughout against the accused but inclining occasionally to sympathy, and permanently bathed in sweat.

In appearance it all had much in common with a normal court of law, but only in appearance. From beginning to end the hearing was secret. Yet the entire trial, which went on for some fourteen days, was recorded on tape. To whom the lengthy secret was later played back was something I never discovered.

In the light of the "socialist justice" that was being so heavily propagated in official quarters, certain arrangements struck one as curious. Among other things, defending counsel was not allowed to make any written notes. If they did so nevertheless, they had to deposit them with the court until the next session before they could leave the room.

The chairman appeared to be a forthright jurist. His prime concern was to dissociate himself from the impending judgment in order that it might later be seen that the sentences, wholly unjustified and indeed unjustifiable in law, had been passed at the instance of a higher authority.

The court did not meet in any of the recognized courtrooms. A room in the AVO building was adapted for the purpose. The accused thus remained in the hands of the secret police—the same men who had interrogated them—throughout. In contrast to the trials held in Rakosi's day, the accused were allowed to choose their own counsel—from a list compiled especially for the purpose. If one of the defending counsel incurred the displeasure of the court or the public prosecutor, he was either forbidden to plead in political cases in the future or his practice was taken away from him for alleged "revisionist opinions." (This in fact happened to my counsel because he had dared at my express request to argue with court and public prosecutor.) Furthermore, this

court recognized no appeal. The sentence pronounced by Dr. Vida was to be both irrevocable and irreparable.

In 1957 I was brought to trial with three other accused—the writer Tibor Déry, Zoltán Zelk, and Tibor Tardos.

There was no explaining why precisely these four should have been wrapped in the one bouquet. It was not even suggested that we had committed some crime together. Great pains were taken to break with the practices of Stalin's and Rakosi's courts. "Socialist justice" was the current catch phrase. Easier said than done. In order to furnish grounds for the inhuman sentences that were politically indispensable, it proved necessary after all to resort again and again to the detested judicial fabrications by means of which Rakosi had until recently wangled his victims into prison and up the gallows steps. Many victims of that tyranny had managed to survive the reign of terror and were now in positions of power. But they were not happy with it. Without lies, persecution, fabricated charges, and rigged sentences they, too, would have got nowhere.

THE WITNESSES

Pali Susán had once been a miner. When I met him his political career had begun. He was in the army, where he became a political officer. I was mad about that young man; I thought I had made the acquaintance of a new kind of human being. But he was only one of the new ruling class.

Young Pali Susán came to see me one day during the uprising and poured out his heart to me. He told me he was fed up with the army as a profession and wanted me to advise him what to do.

"You're a miner," I said, trying to buck him up a bit. "With your knowledge and with your political schooling maybe you could do even more for the mining industry than you're doing in the army."

Pali thanked me, much moved. The report of our meeting that he then submitted to the AVO ran to eight pages. I was shown the document by Major Zentai, the investigating officer, who was busy fabricating out of it a case of "spreading sedition in the People's Army" on the part of the writers.

There was a further document from Pali Susán's hand. Shortly after my Kucsera article had appeared I met him at a military staff college. I and a number of other writers had been invited to read from our works and discuss literature generally. The officers gave me a stormy ovation and wanted to hear "Kucsera." Afterward there were some questions of the usual naive kind: could a high-up officer or even a general be a "Kucsera" too?—that sort of thing. My answer was, "It's something no one is proof against. Everybody has to watch himself."

This remark, too, Susán saw as seditious. What I had meant, he claimed, was that the ministers of defense and other high-ranking army officers were so many "Kucseras." Such a statement would have been sufficient to brand me as a counter-revolutionary and the revolution as a counter-revolution. (These activities proved useful for Susán's career, incidentally. He was appointed a member of a court martial and had occasion to contribute to the passage of numerous sentences.)

But even this evidence proved so worthless that the public prosecutor felt obliged to fall back on my appearance at a meeting in Györ a few days before the outbreak of the revolution.

Actually the Györ meeting was to have been a routine literary discussion, but to my surprise I arrived to find a vast crowd assembled. That evening I began—slow study that I was—to realize that a storm was brewing in the land. Questions were fired at me—pointed political questions, nothing like the naivetés of the staff college—about the withdrawal of Soviet troops, the exploitation of Soviet-occupied countries, the freedom of literature, the abolition of censorship, and so on. I answered on the spur of the moment; the answers were, after all, in the air.

The public prosecutor called two young men as witnesses, young writers from Györ; their names were new to me. Both had been in prison for months already, had been beaten up on their arrest, and were thus expected to be particularly pliable. Yet if that court had had anything to do with justice these witnesses would have been the ruin of the prosecution. Quite independently of one another they were unanimous in their belief that what I had done in Györ was to save an extremely precarious situation; had it not been for my outspoken answers, they said, blood would have flowed that evening. But I, as one of the witnesses said, "had steered the ship of the Communist party with a steady hand."

Asked by my defending counsel why I had had to steer the ship of the Communist party and whether there had been no properly appointed helmsmen present, the witness replied that the entire local party leadership had been there to begin with but that later, when things became too hot for them, they had skedaddled to a man.

Everyone knew that the witnesses were doing themselves a lot of harm with such testimony without doing me any good. But during that time one told the truth for the truth's sake.

One heard a lot of stories in prison about Györ, its AVO, and its party leadership. The young producer Földes had recited revolutionary poetry in the street so that the party leadership could in the meantime slip away to safety. For this "seditious activity" Földes was hanged. The same party leadership was said to have escaped from the crowd by way of an engineer's office, surreptitiously knocking a hole in the back wall and slipping into a side alley. The engineer got six years' jail. The party leadership, however, survived all these various trials and sentences.

The majority of the writers called as witnesses in our case sought and found an opportunity for somehow making clear that they identified with us accused, whereas they had nothing but scorn for the court and did not regard it as a legal body. The first thing they did

on entering the court room was to salute us with a bow. Devecseri, the Homer translator, unambiguously and with grim Homeric humor, offered the court his arse.

Not that anyone was in any doubt as to the fact that this was a life-and-death affair. And if the idea of demanding the death penalty for one or even more of us was in fact dropped, it was not through any sudden access to justice, nor did it have anything to do with the worthlessness of the evidence for the prosecution. It happened under pressure of public opinion both at home and abroad.

And even though the authorities refused—among others—the composer Zoltán Kodály and the writers Gyula Illyés, Áron Tamási, and László Németh permission to speak out in our favor (though the latter, in fact, did us imprisoned writers much harm with a toast he later came out with in Moscow), their protests, tenaciously repeated, were not without effect.

In our case the voice of public opinion was clearly perceptible. Our "Help! Help! Help!" had found an echo. Committees were formed in many countries for the liberation of the Hungarian writers. For three years and more, up until the amnesties of April 1, 1960 and 1961, the Hungarian government and the Soviet government were bombarded with letters of protest, petitions, and telegrams. Roosevelt's widow, Nehru, Camus, de Villefosse, Sartre, the British Labour Party leadership with Gaitskell, Bevan. . . . I shall not even try to list all the prominent people who spoke up for us. What Togliatti wrote about the Hungarian Revolution and its causes the brutal stringency of party discipline forced him in large part to take back, but nevertheless his words rang true. My old friends Arthur Koestler, Ignazio Silone, and Alfred Kantorowicz were beside me once more after years of separation, even though vast distances still did separate us geographically.

A true and dependable savior was the P.E.N. Club: Carver in London, Csokor in Vienna. Franz Theodor Csokor, still in his old age a tireless campaigner for truth and human dignity, came pounding a second time on my cell door, refusing to be led astray by the fact that it had once been the anti-Communists and was now the Communists that had clapped me in jail.

My articles on the freedom of literature and on Kucsera were reprinted over and over again in any number of languages. François Bondy, who had been in Budapest during the uprising and managed to look me up, had taken the texts back with him to Paris. And how could I forget the BBC with its life-saving promptitude?

Even so, the number of the victims was horrifyingly large. When I was in the special section of the Budapest Reception Prison the condemned men used to be led past my window early in the morning to the place of execution. Often they called out their names as a last good-by. I only recognized one of them, because I had known the man well —Otto Szirmai, the radio-drama producer. Another way you could tell execution mornings was from the warders who worked as barbers. They were pale and trembling. They had just shaved those about to die.

With the prosecution in such a pickle, how important the testimony of a witness like György Maté must have been! He was the party secretary of the Writers' Union. The court had utter confidence in him. He had presided at the meeting of October 23 at which I had been nominated to go to party headquarters to negotiate. He had been present at my talk with Gerö, as on countless other occasions. He could have been a mine of "mitigating circumstances." Many people expected him to be our salvation.

"Was the witness not present," I asked, "when I got a certain person to promise not to open fire on the people?"

The party secretary turned red, then white, and finally croaked out, "I recall no such occasion."

A party man you could depend on.

During the trial, which lasted two weeks or so, I shared a cell with a student named Lehel. I seem to have told him a good deal about Eva because he arrived at a pretty good picture of her character. As the trial neared its end I was busy marshalling my ideas for my summing up. I tried out the effect of my speech on my cell mate, as is common practice in prison. I completed my peroration; Lehel was silent and thoughtful for a while. Then he said approvingly, "Mrs. Eva will be very pleased."

THE VERDICT

My summing up made no appeal to justice and the law. Had I not known that these had little bearing on the proceedings, the fact would have been brought home to me during the hearing. I talked instead about Molière. My guilt, I said, consisted in the fact that I as a playwright had failed to learn from the fate of the great Molière. He had wanted to attack the affected piety of the Tartuffes and, lo and behold, the whole church had felt itself threatened. I had wanted in my Kucsera article—my having written that was accounted my offense—to criticize the bad element of officialdom. Officialdom as a whole had taken my remarks to refer to itself as a whole.

I had only one request to make of my judges. If in spite of everything the court should sentence me and I should have to stay in prison, I asked that the permission to read and write that had been granted me while I had been awaiting trial should be extended. I wanted to write a historical play. I did not, of course, receive an answer to my request. But for more than half of the three years and three months I was to spend in jail, I was in fact allowed to read and write, and Eva was allowed to send me the necessary source material.

The sentences were: Déry, nine years; J.H., six years; the other two accused, Zelk and Tardos, three years and one and a half years respectively. In Déry's and my case, complete sequestration of property as well.

本朝水滸傳剛勇鬼個

日本武尊

東夷征罰の折から夷賊共草むら
より附尊の焼本らんとす尊宝劔と
薙ぎ払ひ火忽夷賊方へ飛よく焼滅
ぼす是よう艸薙の宝劔とよべ云

一勇斎國芳画

"Oh, Lone Pine Tree!"

Prince Yamato Takeru, archetype of Japan's long line of poignant, lonely heroes, began his career in an unedifying manner by murdering his elder twin brother in a privy

By IVAN MORRIS

One day Emperor Keiko called his son Prince Takeru and asked why his brother was not appearing at meal times. Regular attendance at the imperial board was a token of loyalty, and the emperor now ordered the young prince to reprimand his delinquent twin. Five days went by, but still the elder brother did not come. His Majesty accordingly asked, "Why has your brother not appeared for such a long time? Can it be that you did not give him my instructions?" "I have already instructed him," replied the prince. "And how did you instruct him?" "Early in the morning," said the prince, "when my brother went into the privy, I was lying in wait for him. I seized him, smashed him to pieces, tore off his limbs, wrapped them in a straw mat, and threw them away."

By any standards this was a severe penalty for missing some meals, and Emperor Keiko was shocked by his son's rough, fearless nature. No doubt to prevent further mischief at court he dispatched him to the island of Kyushu, where he might put his zeal to better use by attacking the dissident Kumaso tribesmen.

Hurling his magic sword at the hirsute hand of a cringing barbarian, Prince Yamato Takeru, fierce hero of Japanese legend, bounds above the crimson grasses of a burning steppe in this nineteenth-century print by Kuniyoshi.

The young man who burst on the scene with an act of such furious violence died fourteen years later on a solitary plain, a melancholy, romantic figure who, having been defeated in his last battle, had lost all desire to live. It is this final image of Yamato Takeru that has appealed to the Japanese people rather than his "rough, fearless nature" as a lad or his subsequent military successes, which were frequently marred by trickery and vindictiveness. The contrast between Yamato Takeru's ferocity in his early career and his gentle, poetic quality toward the end confirms what is already clear from the chronicles: this many-faceted hero is no single historical personage but a composite figure who over a period of years became the central character in an entire cycle of Japanese legends.

The Chronicles of Japan gives his date of birth as a year corresponding to A.D. 72 in our calendar, and describes his career during the following three decades as though he were an actual member of the imperial family, a prince who won a series of brilliant victories against the enemies of the court until he was finally defeated in Omi Province and perished on Nobo Plain. In fact, his story reflects the careers of numerous commanders who were sent from Yamato to subdue unreconciled tribes in Kyushu and the eastern provinces and who died during their campaigns. The actual period is not the first but the fourth century A.D., the so-called "riddle century" in Japanese history. It was a time of strife and disorder, marked by bitter fighting in Korea and by a concerted effort of the ruling clan, which had recently established itself in the Yamato region, to bring the population of the main islands of Japan under its control. From numerous tales and traditions that originated during this misty period and from a gallimaufry of myths, poems, legends, and Chinese literary influences there evolved the figure of "the Brave of Japan," presented in the chronicles as the greatest man of the period.

In some ways Yamato Takeru is the standard folk hero we find in almost every culture on the boundary between legend and history. Yet he has a peculiarly Japanese appeal. By piecing together the accounts in the chronicles, we can visualize him as a single person who actually lived and suffered and died some sixteen centuries ago. Much of the story belongs to the familiar paradigm of the universal legendary hero who recurs in all centuries and countries; but there are significant variants, especially in the ending.

The hero's father, Keiko, was one of the semihistorical emperors who reigned during the troubled period of consolidation. He is listed as the twelfth

emperor of Japan (the present emperor, Hirohito, theoretically his direct descendant, is the one hundred and twenty-fourth); but like most of the early rulers he is a shadowy figure, and, though he is said to have reigned for sixty years and to have lived to the venerable age of 106, almost nothing is known about his character or achievements.

The most remarkable feat credited to Emperor Keiko is his marriage to his own great-great-granddaughter. This genealogical *tour de force* occurred when he took as wife a princess who was the great-granddaughter of his son, Yamato Takeru. Among Keiko's eighty children were two male twins, "born on the same day with the same placenta." The emperor, much impressed by this event, climbed on top of a mortar to announce it to the court, and the twins were accordingly dubbed Ōusu (Great Mortar) and Ousu (Little Mortar). Prince Ōusu turned out to be a disobedient lad, who came to an untimely end. Concerning the younger twin, who was to become Yamato Takeru, the chronicles report that "while a child he was endowed with a brave spirit, and when he reached manhood he was of sublime beauty." The future hero was enormously tall, and strong enough—the hyperbole is Chinese—to lift a great tripod single-handedly.

At age fifteen, Prince Ousu was sent west to attack the Kumaso. Like the Emishi of the eastern and northern provinces, they belonged to the same racial stock as the Japanese, but they were concentrated in remote regions and had been separated from the mainstream of cultural development for so long that they were regarded as aliens or aborigines who had to be subdued and brought under the civilizing control of the powerful Yamato clans. Before setting out for the west, the boy-hero visited his aunt, the high priestess of the Great Shrine at Ise, and she gave him a robe, a skirt, and a sword.

When he reached the house of the Brave of the Kumaso, he saw that it was surrounded by three ranks of warriors who had entrenched themselves in a pit-dwelling by the wall. There was a tremendous noise and bustle in anticipation of a party that was to be held to celebrate the completion of the dwelling, and food was being prepared for the banquet. He wandered about the house, waiting for the day of the celebration. When the time came, he unfastened his hair and combed it down over his shoulders in maidenly style. Then he put on his aunt's robe and skirt and, having made himself look exactly like a girl, mingled with the women and entered the pit-dwelling.

The two Kumaso chieftains were much impressed when they saw the maiden and invited her to sit between them as they continued their carousing. Prince Ousu waited until the festivities were at their height, when he pulled out the sword from the breast of his robe and, seizing the elder Kumaso by the collar, pierced him through the chest. The younger Kumaso rushed from the room in terror. The prince chased him to the foot of the stairs, grabbed him from behind, and thrust his sword up his backside. Then the chieftain said, "Do not move your sword any further. I have something to say to you."

The prince held him down and agreed to listen. Then the chieftain said, "Who may you be, my lord?" "I am the son of [the emperor] who dwells in the palace of Hishiro and who rules the Great Land of the Eight Islands. . . . Hearing that you two Kumaso chieftains were disrespectful and refused to submit to his commands, His Majesty sent me here with orders to kill you." "Yes, this must be true," said the chieftain. "For here in the west there are no strong, brave men except us two, but in the Great Land of Yamoto there is one who excels us both in courage. I shall therefore present you with a name. Henceforth may you be known as Prince Yamato Takeru!"

As soon as the chieftain had finished speaking, the prince killed him, slashing him to pieces like a ripe melon. From that time forward he was called Prince Yamato Takeru.

His mission accomplished, the young prince set off for Yamato. On his way home he stopped in the western province of Izumo to subdue the local chieftain. For this purpose he resorted to a remarkably unattractive ruse. Having first pledged friendship with Izumo Takeru (the Brave of Izumo) and thus established a form of bond that is regarded as sacrosanct in any early society, he secretly fabricated an imitation wooden sword, which he wore at his side. One day he invited Izumo Takeru to go bathing with him in the river, and when they came out of the water he picked up his friend's weapon, saying, "Let us exchange swords!" This was a further pledge of comradeship, and Izumo Takeru innocently put on the bogus weapon. The hero then invited him to cross swords in a friendly bout. The chieftain agreed but he was, of course, unable to unsheathe his wooden weapon, and Yamato Takeru lost no time in slashing him to death. He celebrated this triumph by composing the first of his famous poems, a thirty-one syllable verse in which he mocked Izumo Takeru for carrying a sword without a blade.

When Yamato Takeru finally returned to the capital, exhausted from his campaigns, he was not greeted as a conquering hero or allowed to bask in his success, but was immediately sent on a new mission to subdue the Emishi in the eastern provinces. This was because his brother, who by rights should have undertaken the next expedition, was so terrified by the prospect that he ran away and hid in the grass. From an alternative account, however, one gets the impression that Emperor Keiko wanted to get his son out of the way as soon as possible, perhaps on the principle that that there is nothing more dangerous than a hero out of work. In any case, it is at this point in the narrative that the figure of Yamato Takeru assumes a different cast: the callous, unprincipled bully gives way to a solitary, ill-starred wanderer who, for all his ardent loyalty and achievements in battle, is destined for defeat and early death.

On receiving his marching orders Yamato Takeru addressed the emperor as follows: "It is only a few years ago that I subdued the Kumaso. Now it is the Emishi in the east who have rebelled. When shall we finally have peace in the

land? I am weary of fighting. Yet I shall exert all my powers to quell this new rebellion." Emperor Keiko then gave his son a symbol of military command (a Chinese-type axe in the *Chronicles of Japan* account, a giant holly spear in the more Japanese *Record of Ancient Events*) and delivered a long harangue about the importance of subduing "the rough deities in the mountains, the malicious demons in the plains, who bar the highways and obstruct the roads, causing much suffering to our people." Clearly, there was little distinction between these supernatural creatures and the actual tribesmen who worshiped them; for the emperor immediately went on to say, "Among the eastern savages the most powerful of all are the Emishi." He described their primitive state of culture ("men and women dwell together in promiscuity . . . they dress in furs and drink blood"), and ordered Yamato Takeru to subdue them all.

Before leaving for his final campaign, the hero once more visited the Great Ise Shrine. Keenly aware of the emperor's shabby treatment, he unburdened himself to the high priestess, Emperor Keiko's sister: "Is it because His Majesty wants me to die early? First he sent me to attack the wicked people of the west. Then hardly had I returned when he again sent me on a campaign, this time to subdue the wicked people of the twelve eastern districts, and he has not even provided me with troops. Why should he have done this if it is not that he wishes me to die at an early age?" The high priestess responded to her nephew's *cri de coeur* by giving him a sword, which later became famous as Kusanagi ("the Grass Mower"), and a bag that he was to open in case of emergency.

On his way east Yamato Takeru was betrothed to a princess in Owari Province, but decided not to marry her until he had carried out his mission for the emperor. When he reached the eastern province of Sagami, a local chieftain deceived him with a story about a ferocious deity who dwelt in a marsh on the plain, and Yamato Takeru innocently set off for the attack. As soon as he was in the plain, the chieftain set fire to it; but the hero saved himself by mowing down the grass with the sword and by setting a counterfire with a flint that his aunt had luckily included in his emergency kit.

Yamato Takeru's next adventure in his "road of trials" is one of his most famous. While crossing the straits between Sagami and Kazusa (present-day Tokyo Bay), he aroused the enmity of the deity of the straits, who promptly stirred up the waves and set his boat adrift. Princess Ototachibana, who was accompanying him (and who is rather confusingly identified as his "empress"), knew exactly what must be done in such emergencies: "I will go into the water in your stead," she declared, "so that you, my prince, may carry out the sacred mission that has been entrusted to you and may return to His Majesty and report on it." Then eight layers of rush matting, eight skin mats, and eight silken carpets were spread on top of the waves, and the princess lay on them and sank into the water. This immediately calmed the sea, and Yamato Takeru was able to cross the bay. Seven days later Princess Ototachibana's comb was washed ashore and carefully buried in a tomb.

In the earlier part of his career the hero was pictured as an unfeeling brute; now he has become a different person—a man capable of being profoundly moved by a woman's self-sacrifice.

He was forever lamenting the death of Princess Ototachibana. One day when he had climbed to the top of Mount Usuhi and was gazing toward the southeast, he sighed three times and said, "Alas, my wife [*A tsuma*]." Accordingly, the provinces east of the mountains were named the Land of Azuma.

The hero's final encounters were not with the hairy Emishi but with a series of malignant local deities. It is as though he had now reached a stage where mere human enemies were unworthy of his powers. Entering the wild province of Shinano, he ascended a great mountain, "bravely making his way through the smoky mist." When he reached the summit, he became hungry and sat down for a solitary repast. The god of the mountain took this opportunity to torment the prince and, changing himself into a white deer, came and stood before him. Yamato Takeru, though startled by this apparition, had the wits to pick up a clove of garlic that remained from his meal and hurl it at the deer, hitting the animal in the eye and promptly killing it. This was the act of a true culture-hero: by slaying the beast Yamato Takeru saved all future travelers from the maleficent effect of the god's breath, which in the past had always made it dangerous to cross the mountain. His encounter with the deer did not leave him unscathed, for he became dazed and, losing his way, wandered about helplessly until a kindly white dog came and led him down.

Yamato Takeru now decided to return to the capital and give the emperor a report about his eastern expedition. On his way he stopped in Owari and married the princess; but there was little chance for connubial dalliance, since he was now informed about a fierce god who was entrenched on Mount Ibuki near Lake Biwa. In an excess of hubris he declared that he would subdue this particular deity with his bare hands, and he promptly set off by himself, leaving the invincible Kusanagi sword in his wife's keeping. When Yamato Takeru reached Mount Ibuki, the deity assumed the shape of a huge white serpent (or, in another account, of a white boar "as large as a cow") and lay across the road in front of him. Once again the hero was the victim of a ruse, since he was deluded into believing that the monster was not the actual deity but his messenger. A mere servant, he explained to the animal, was hardly worth the trouble of someone who had vanquished so many actual gods. Yamato Takeru then continued up the mountain. It was a fatal mistake. As *The Record of Ancient Events* specifies with Teutonic precision, "This was not a messenger of the deity; it was the deity himself." By addressing him-

self directly to this supernatural creature Yamato Takeru had violated a taboo. "Then the god of the mountain raised clouds in the sky and produced a hail storm. The top of the mountain was covered with mist and the lower part shrouded in gloom. Unable to find the path, Yamato Takeru wandered about in confusion, but he forced his way onward through the mist and finally managed to escape."

But the hero had been mortally damaged by supernatural pollution. When he reached the foot of the mountain, he was still in a daze, "as though he were a drunken man." It is at this point in the story that Yamato Takeru made the most striking of all his remarks: "I had always felt in my heart that one day I would soar high up into the sky. But now my legs will not move properly and have become all wobbly." Realizing that his ambitions had been thwarted and that he was now hopelessly earthbound, the exhausted hero hobbled along, supporting himself with a stick. For a while he recovered his senses, thanks to the magic waters of a spring at the foot of the mountain. But the benign power that had protected the hero in his superhuman passage had now finally deserted him. His illness (which a modern medical scholar has rather prosaically diagnosed as beriberi) soon returned, and, realizing that death was imminent, the young man did not even stop on his way through Owari to see his bride but pressed on for the capital, determined to make his last report to the emperor in person. He failed. On reaching the Plain of Nobo in northern Ise, Yamato Takeru collapsed and, after reciting a final series of nostalgic poems, sent a farewell message concluding with the words, "I had hoped that the day and hour might come when I could report on my mission to Your Majesty, but my span of life has suddenly reached its end. Time passes as swiftly as a four-horse carriage flashing by a crack in the wall, and nothing will stay its course. So now I must lie down alone on this wild plain without a single companion to hear my words. Yet why should I repine at the death of this body? My only regret is that I shall never again behold Your Majesty."

This was the end. He died at the age of thirty. On hearing the news, the emperor was shattered: he could not eat or sleep, and spent his days in tears and breast beating. His former doubts about the prince's "rough, fearless nature" were entirely forgotten as he recalled the young man's heroism: "When the Emishi arose in the east, there was no one else I could send to chastise them, and despite my deep love [for my son] I had to dispatch him to the land of the rebels. Since then not a day has passed without my thinking of him; morning and evening I have paced these rooms, longing for the day of his return. What curse is upon me, what evil have I committed, that he should be snatched from me so unexpectedly? Who now can possibly undertake our great enterprises of state?"

He ordered an imperial tumulus built on the Plain of Nobo, and thus (in accordance with universal custom) the hero was buried where he had died. The last part of the legend is perhaps the most remarkable:

> Now Yamato Takeru was transformed into a white bird, and came out of the tomb and flew towards the Land of Yamato. The officials accordingly opened his coffin and, looking in, saw that the shroud was empty and the corpse had vanished. Messengers were sent in pursuit of the white bird. It stopped first on Kotohiki Plain in Yamato, and so a tumulus was built there. Next the white bird flew to Kochi, alighting in the village of Furuichi, where another tumulus was built. . . . Finally it soared high into the sky. Nothing of the Prince remained to be buried except his robes and his court cap.

The myth of the white bird may possibly reflect Taoist ideas about immortal spirits. No doubt it is also connected with beliefs about the magical power of white animals. Its main significance in the story of Yamato Takeru, however, is surely the image of flying and escape: the hero, thwarted in his dreams of "soaring up high into the sky," that is, of transcending the worldly limitations that lead to defeat and failure, finds eventual liberation in death. This accords perfectly with the romantic character of Yamato Takeru in the second part of his career: the melancholy young hero who makes his way through the wild eastern provinces, intrepidly attacking hostile deities and tribesmen until finally he is overcome by the wiles of a mountain god and dies on a barren plain, "alone and palely loitering," the victim of a typically romantic confrontation between fate and his own pride.

Yamato Takeru's status as a hero is confirmed by his love of poetry, the indispensable art for Japanese men and women of sensibility. Military men in Japan, unlike their typical Western counterparts, whose pleasures tend to focus on wine, women, and slaughter, have frequently evinced a remarkable taste for poetry; and throughout the long centuries of warfare their respect for things artistic did much to redeem the pervasive brutality of samurai life. Unlike the West, where there has traditionally been a debate concerning the comparative virtues conferred on a man by arms and by arts, Japan has never regarded the two as incompatible. Far from it: a feeling for poetry was a confirmation of the warrior's sincerity. For all the conventional limits of its form, the little tanka verse, with its rigid syllabic framework, has been honored as the means of expressing deep emotion.

The Japanese tragic hero, whose life is pitched at a higher emotional level than most men's, will often reveal his most powerful feelings in verse, especially as his career races toward its culmination. The tradition of farewell poems goes back to the country's most distant past, and hardly a single Japanese hero, from Yamato Takeru in legendary times until the kamikaze pilots in recent years, died without having first taken poetic leave of the world. This verse is rarely of the highest quality, but whatever it may lack in elegance and prosodic skill, it

will always reflect the emotional sincerity that marks the true hero.

With one unendearing exception, Yamato Takeru's poems belong to the romantic part of his career. Shortly after the hero's lament for the drowned princess there occurred an incident that exemplified his respect for the ancient art of versification. Yamato Takeru had reached the land of Kai and, having evidently lost track of time, asked how long it had been since he passed Tsukuba (a mountainous district in Hitachi Province). He worded the question as the first lines of a poem, and the answer was provided in perfect metrical form (five-seven-five syllables) by an old man tending a fire. The hero was so delighted by this humble laborer's show of poetic dexterity that he appointed him local chieftain of the east.

Among the romantic verses attributed to Yamato Takeru, the following lines are said to have been composed during his final illness, when he discovered a sword he had left under a pine tree. The personification of the tree, an unusual device for early Japanese poetry, evokes the hero's forlorn state in his last days.

On the Cape of Otsu
Directly facing Owari,
There you stand,
Oh, lone pine tree!
Oh, my brother!
Were you a man,
Oh, lonely pine,
I would gird you with a sword,
I would give you robes to wear.
Oh, lone pine tree!
Oh, my brother!

By far the most famous of Yamato Takeru's poems are the final "homesick songs," of which the following are the first and the last:

Ah, Yamato, fairest of all lands,
Girt with mountains like a
many-layered hedge of green!
How dear to me is the beauty
of Yamato!

Alas, the precious sword
That I left by the maiden's bed!
Ah, for that sword of mine!

"As soon as he had finished these poems," it is chronicled in *The Record of Ancient Events*, "His Highness died."

Yamato Takeru belongs to a long line of ill-fated young heroes who, through the centuries, have had a particular appeal to the Japanese sensibility. Their misfortune is not merely "a kind of innocence" but a central aspect of their heroic status. This is related to a general outlook on life that is, in many ways, diametrically opposite to Western attitudes. The Judaeo-Christian approach is based on the comforting idea that, so long as a man keeps his faith, God will be on his side and he, or at least his cause, will eventually triumph. Thus a hero like Roland, though defeated in battle, is never abandoned by God and succeeds in contributing to the Christian victory over the Saracens.

This outlook has been especially conspicuous in the most Western of all major Western countries, the United States of America, whose tradition has always tended to exclude any tragic sense of life and, often against cogent evidence to the contrary, to put its trust in the essential goodness of mankind, or at least in that part of mankind fortunate enough to reside within its boundaries. "I know America," a recent president was fond of saying, "and the heart of America is good." The statement is not without irony when one recalls the identity of its author; yet the sentiment reflects an underlying assumption that has been widely and confidently accepted. Americans, of course, are no strangers to despair, yet it arises not from any philosophical awareness of man's existential limitations but from an excess of hope in the possibility of encompassing worldly happiness.

In contrast, the Japanese have tended since ancient times to resign themselves to the idea that the world and the human condition are *not* essentially benign. For all their vigor and ebullience, there is in them a deep strain of pessimism, a sense that ultimately things are against us, and that, however hard we may strive, we are involved in a losing game. Sooner or later, each individual is doomed to fail, for, even if he overcomes the multifarious hurdles set forth by a harsh society, he will finally be defeated by the natural powers of age, illness, and death. Human life — the *yo no naka* so repeatedly apostrophized by the poets — is full of sad vicissitudes, fleeting, impermanent like the seasons. Helplessness and failure are built into human enterprises, and as the most common of all Japanese sayings, *shikata ga nai*, reminds us, there is nothing to be done, it cannot be helped.

This underlying pessimism, resulting mainly from a combination of Buddhist doctrine and a constant exposure to natural disasters, is revealed in a fascination with the extreme situation, which has produced a long literature of disaster, extending from *The Tales of the Tairas* and other ancient war chronicles to modern novels like *Fires on the Plain*.

Yet in the very impermanence and poignancy of the human condition, the Japanese have discovered a positive quality. Their recognition of the special beauty inherent in evanescence, worldly misfortune, and the "pathos of things (*mono no aware*) in many ways replaces the blithe Western belief in the possibility of "happiness." This understanding of *lacrimae rerum* is reflected in an instinctive sympathy with the tragic fate of the failed hero, whose defeat by the forces of a hostile world exemplifies in a most dramatic form the confrontation of every living creature with adversity, suffering, and death. While we are all eventually doomed to go under, the pathos of worldly misfortune is especially evocative when the victim is young, pure, and sincere. His fall represents in human form that quintessential Japanese image, the scattering of the fragile cherry blossom.

This article was adapted from The Nobility of Failure: Tragic Heroes in the History of Japan, *which Holt, Rinehart will publish this spring. A professor of Japanese at Columbia, Ivan Morris is also the U.S. chairman of Amnesty International.*

The Quintessential
CARTIER-BRESSON

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LORRAINE, 1959

Henri Cartier-Bresson, born near Paris in 1908, has long been recognized as one of the world's great masters of photography. Two years ago he began to search through his thousands of contact sheets for those pictures that could not, he felt, be excluded from his life's testament. The resultant archive of 385 photographs was bought by the Menil Foundation of Houston; from it, we have selected the portfolio that follows.

For forty years, Cartier-Bresson—armed only with a Leica—has striven to capture the fleeting reality of what he calls, in the title of his best-known book, "the decisive moment." He employs neither gimmicks of craft nor tricks of composition, for, as Lincoln Kirstein has written, "he is not making art, but taking life." His quest has led him all over the world, yet wherever he is, and however exotic his subject, he remains true to the French classical tradition, with its stress on simplicity, clarity, and economy of means. Like Saint-Simon and Stendhal, moreover—both among his favorite authors—he focuses on the lyric essence of history rather than on the tragic or comic.

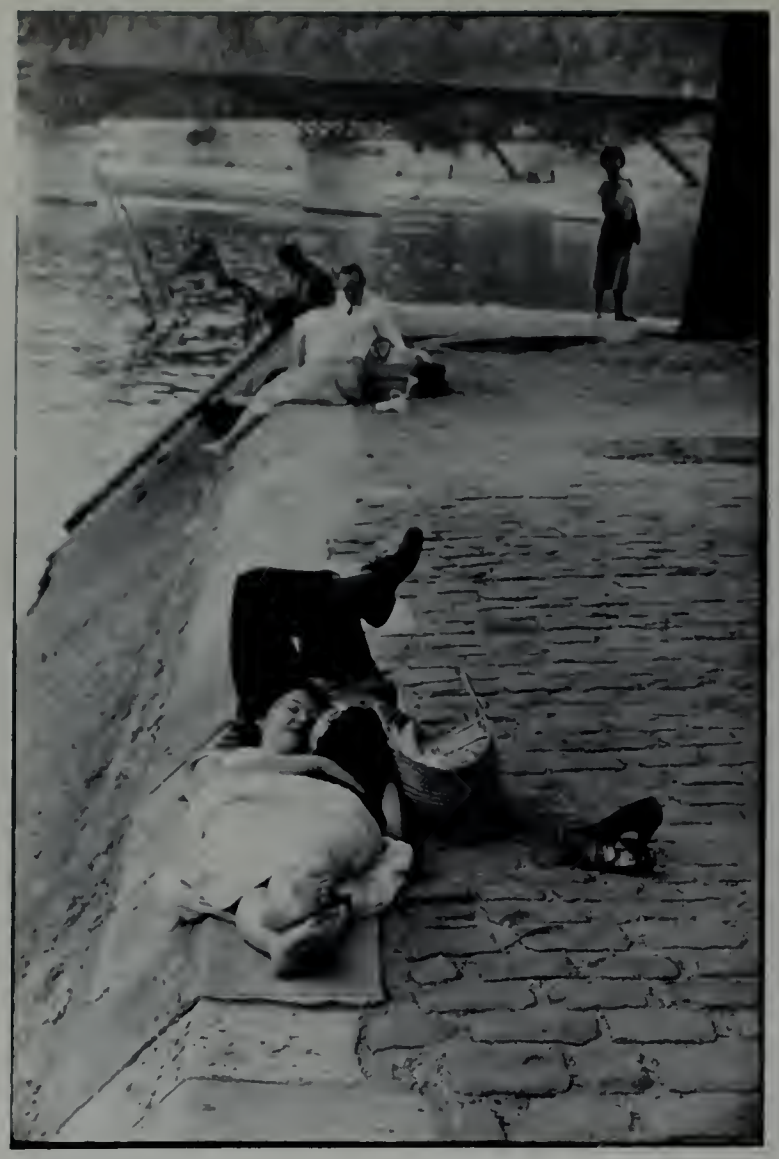
Cartier-Bresson is French, too, in his respect for reality. Like Cézanne painting for the twentieth time his beloved Mont Sainte-Victoire, like Proust recalling the taste of a madeleine dipped in tea many years before to re-create a long-vanished world, this photographer concentrates on the particulars of a scene to transform a passing fragment of existence into enduring art. As a realist, he cares little about children, old people, events in the abstract, but cares intensely about *this* little girl, *this* old man, *this* event . . . at *this* moment.

Of the innumerable candids he has snapped over the years, none, we think, better convey his joyous sense of the mystery of human existence and of the unique worth of individual humans than do those of couples. So here they are—in youth and old age, fumbling and graceful, sad and celebratory, intimate and distant. Each image not only fixes forever a "precise and transitory instant" but glows with the zest of its creator, who once, to an interviewer, summed up his attitude toward his calling in these terms:

"I enjoy shooting a picture. Being present. It's a way of saying Yes! yes! yes! It's like the last three words of Joyce's *Ulysses*. It's 'yes, yes, yes.' And there are no maybes. . . . It's a tremendous enjoyment to say, 'Yes!' Even if it's something you hate. 'Yes!' It's an affirmation."

—O. DE K., JR.

LONGCHAMP, 1954



Paris, 1954

Chartres, 1968

Le Mans, 1967

Joinville-le-Pont, 1938

Ivry-sur-Seine, 1955

Paris, 1959

PARIS, 1968

Mexico City, 1964

PET POWER

By J. H. PLUMB

Liberation is the cliché of our time. The only acceptable army is one of liberation—IRA, Vietcong, and the rest; even a terrorist mob of psychopathic gangsters, such as the Symbionese Liberation Army, will acquire some support from the lunatic fringe of the radical chic as long as the word "liberation" is used in the title of their bogus movement. And, it seems, everyone is in urgent need of liberation: blacks from whites, women from men, children from school (now regarded as a prison), the old from the young, and, of course, animals from humans. Yes, animals from humans. Soon, perhaps, it will be the vegetables. (After all, we grow them in serried ranks, force their growth in hothouses, freeze them in a living death, and, God forgive us, *eat* them—something we no longer do to blacks, women, children, or the aged.)

But animals. I am afraid we still eat animals. This ghoulish practice was the culminating charge in a passionate indictment in the *New York Review of Books* of man's brutality to his animal cousins. The list of crimes is long: we cut them up or inject them with horrors to gratify our curiosity about disease; we force them to excessive childbearing (cows); deprive them of sleep (battery hens); brutally train them for circuses; imprison them in zoos; kill them and eat them. If any society treated human beings as we do animals, the public outrage would be uncontrollable.

Still, there is the old reverse side of the coin: we are more sentimental, more indulgent, more mythicizing about animals than any other living group except, perhaps, and even this is doubtful, children. Eroticism with animals, according to Danish purveyors of pornography, is on the increase. Authors, sensing the tide, are exposing their feelings for their pets—J. R. Ackerley's *My Dog Tulip* has all the passion, if none of the hubris, of *Héloïse and Abélard* or *Romeo and Juliet*; Gavin Maxwell became bewitched by an otter; and poor T. H. White was besotted with a dog. Children's books are packed with animals that talk like humans, dress like humans, and have human feelings. Indeed, the story of Brer Rabbit was so deeply embedded in the folklore of the English upper classes that at the turn of the century rhetoric in the House of Lords reached unthinkable heights as peer after peer went purple with rage denouncing the deliberate spread of a lethal virus, myxomatosis, among rabbits. And yet, the cruelest discipline can still be imposed to make animals and birds look and behave like humans. Harsh and monstrous techniques have been used to teach a female chimpanzee to eat like a human, a horse to dance a hornpipe and brew a pot of tea, a dog to play the grand piano, and, incredibly, canaries to ride a bicycle.

Indeed, our relationship to animals is paradoxical. Every day millions of animals are beaten and brutalized throughout the world to make them work; even more are slaughtered to feed the human race. And yet, tribes of men have deified and totemized animals and birds, and claimed them as their ancestors. In India, the sacred mother cow wanders and defecates at will through the bazaars, and a peasant will lift a caterpillar from a path to preserve its life and perhaps the soul of his grandmother. At the same time pets, and the pet industry, have never flourished so extravagantly as they now do throughout the Western world. There seem to be as many television advertisements for pet foods as there are for automobiles. One recent statistic claims that there are six million pet dogs in New York City, or about three dogs for every four people. And psychiatrists have even persuaded many university chancellors to allow students to bring their dogs to college in order to provide them with emotional outlets!

Three hundred years ago pets scarcely existed as a social phenomenon. People might adopt a lamb that had lost its mother or seize a bird from the hedgerow and cage it for its song; a fashionable woman might possess a parrot. But in the main, household animals were tools—cats were for controlling

SEND YOUR DOG TO CAMP: You've packed the kids off to camp. now what about Fido? You can send him to camp too and spare him dull days at a cramped kennel. Campo-Lindo For Dogs in Parkville. New York. offers spacious accommodations and a program of recreation for your canine camper Each dog enjoys his own private cabin with 400 square feet of romping space. choice of meal plan and lots of activities. ranging from your basic fetch and catch to swimming. all for $40 a week or $150 a month. including pick-up and delivery. **CAMPO-LINDO FOR DOGS, DRYBROOK ROAD, PARKVILLE, NEW YORK.**

The Village Voice, JULY 11, 1974

It's a dog's life these days to romp at a resort, above, or munch "pupcakes," below, at the Animal Gourmet restaurant in Manhattan.

J. P. LAFFONT—SYGMA

vermin; dogs were for hunting, for herding sheep, or for guarding the house. Only the rich could afford to feed a useless animal. And because animals were largely tools, little emotion was felt toward them. They were the inferior creatures that God had thoughtfully provided for the use of man. If they were tamable, their role was to work; if wild, to be killed for food or destroyed for fun; if rare, to be caged for amusement.

Changes in social attitude are usually subterranean as well as labyrinthine. But one of the best indicators of the changing status of animals in the eighteenth century is the spread of pets —in growing numbers and kinds— throughout the population. Once pets become a regular feature of social life, emotions about animals intensify; it is no surprise, then, that the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the R.S.P.C.A., was founded in England in the early nineteenth century. Nor is it a coincidence that its founding occurred when there was growing social protest over cruelty to children, the subordination of women, and the enslavement of blacks—all part of a heightened sensitivity to life.

Dogs and birds were the first animals absolved from work of all kinds. Rich women have always had a penchant for lap dogs, but specialized breeds of small, decorative dogs were comparatively slow to appear. The pug, brought from China and made greatly fashionable by the addiction of Queen Mary II of England to the breed, began to worm into the boudoirs of the European aristocracy in the late seventeenth century. Within a few decades lap dogs were licking the hands of the middle class and being immortalized in art. Hogarth lovingly included his dog, Pug, in his finest self-portrait; Madame de Pompadour had her own favorite—a miniature spaniel—modeled in Vincennes porcelain; and Meissen produced scores of pot-pugs for chimneypieces. The lap dog, the epitome of the household pet, had become an established part of social life. Indeed, fine hunting dogs such as the French poodle became toys.

But birds, in some ways, were more in vogue than dogs. They were cheaper, cost less to feed, and any amateur could breed and cross them, hoping to produce a songster of such quality that a hobby could be turned to profit. Hence, their popularity rapidly achieved a broad class base. When or how canaries entered Europe we do not know. What is certain is that by 1600 Austria had developed specialist breeding centers in the Tyrol, and Italy was doing a flourishing canary export trade. By 1720 the demand for canaries in England had reached down to the artisans, and a regular bird market was held in Covent Garden. Around mid-century there were specialist birdsellers in the provinces, as well as in London. The canary had not only encouraged the sale and breeding of native songsters—nightingales, linnets, and the like—but the importation of an extensive range of exotics, from Muscovy ducks and pink flamingos to crown birds from Africa. Aristocrats kept large aviaries; middle-class bird lovers small ones; the lower classes a cage or two.

Even more remarkable was the discovery of the homing instinct of the carrier pigeon. The first demonstration of its flying range took place in the 1730's, when a bird released in Bury Saint Edmunds, Suffolk, made a beeline for its loft ninety miles away in London. After that, pigeon-keeping became a mania, affecting the gentry as well as the working class, and bringing them together, as pugilism and cricket did, in a common pastime.

Ornamental fish became fashionable later than ornamental birds. Goldfish were first sold in Holland in the 1690's and in England in 1705. By 1730 they were the rage. Horace Walpole bred them at Strawberry Hill and delighted in making presents of them. Thomas Gray wrote an ode to a goldfish in its bowl, endowing both the fish and the cat that wanted to eat it with lively human sentiments. Soon ornamental fish of considerable variety were being sold all throughout Europe.

Toward the end of the eighteenth century an extensive trade in pets had developed, mainly in the urban centers in England. By 1785 a shop in Soho Square was specializing in pets, offering more than a score of different varieties of birds along with monkeys, squirrels, white mice, and dogs. But the dog had become, and was to remain, the quintessential household pet. The object of lavish affection and considerable expense, dogs often sported silver or silk collars and inhabited rococo kennels in the mistress's bedroom. Such expenditure, outside royal families, would have been unthinkable in England, or anywhere else, a century earlier.

This development was double-edged: animals adopted as pets could be delightful; they showed devotion, at times appeared semihuman—and ultimately proved capable of civilizing their owners, or at least rendering their masters and mistresses more sensitive. For whatever reason, as the number of pets grew, a steady and remorseless attack on cruelty to animals gathered momentum in late eighteenth-century England. Bearbaiting was suppressed. A long legal battle at Stamford, a tiny market town in Lincolnshire, ended in the banning of a traditional sport—bull-running. Magistrates began to show no mercy toward the crueler rustic merriments, such as pulling off the greased heads of live geese as they hung by their feet from a tree. In another long and arduous struggle, even the immensely popular sport of cockfighting was made illegal.

The crusade was on; cruelty first, preservation next. The passionate and the committed stopped eating meat, even eggs; they denounced fur, and assaulted women who wore ostrich plumes in their hats; they fought ceaselessly to protect endangered species. The birth of an osprey in England today is headline news. Every year pets proliferate, and the battle intensifies. Who, in 1700, would have thought it possible to be jailed for beating a horse? Maybe in 2100 we will be jailed for eating a steak.

THE BETTMANN ARCHIVE

My Verdi

Many millions of people in the last century might have written an article with this title. Here is mine, about the Giuseppe Verdi who . . .

. . . belongs to me, with some of the facts of his astonishing and endearing life. I am not a musician, only someone who is pathologically jealous of the worst musician he has ever heard. But I have had some five decades of pleasure in listening to music and have never *enjoyed* any music more than Verdi's. I use the word "enjoyed" as carelessly and unambitiously as the old man himself might have enjoyed a cup of black coffee before getting to work at four o'clock in the morning. He is my Verdi because he made my scalp tingle when I was twelve, because the more I learn about the theatre the more I worship his genius, because that black-suited, white-bearded peasant photographed standing in his garden with his rolled umbrella behind his back is the grandpa of blessings that all of us would have liked to have.

When I was twelve I began to do some writing for the old Metropolitan Opera House Program—biographical notes and verses and fillers. There was no money; I was paid in tickets. Those days, in the late 1920's, were the days of vocal splendor (as phonograph records prove) and of empty houses. That boy of twelve or thirteen or fourteen attended many performances (over which opera lovers now weep), and sometimes he sat in a box alone, his feet extended on a gilt red-cushioned chair, and listened to Rosa Ponselle or Beniamino Gigli or Elisabeth Rethberg or Giuseppe de Luca or Ezio Pinza, watched Tullio Serafin conduct. And often, very often, it was Verdi. The Aga Khan could not have had opera in greater luxe or glory.

Giuseppe Verdi toward the end of his life: "that black-suited, white-bearded peasant . . . standing in his garden with his rolled umbrella behind his back is the grandpa of blessings that all of us would have liked to have."

I began then to read about Verdi, and although I am nothing like a Verdi scholar, reading about him is still one of my happier obsessions.

His life begins in the hamlet of Le Roncole in the broad Po Valley near Parma on October 10, 1813, the year of Wagner's birth. Beethoven was forty-three. When Verdi died in 1901, Wagner had been dead eighteen years, Debussy was now thirty-nine and Stravinsky was nineteen. To say that Verdi encompassed the nineteenth century is something more than a figure of speech.

This prototypical Italian was born French, in a divided Italy. His birth certificate states his given names as Joseph Fortunin François. A few months later French rule over the region gave way to Austrian rule; Verdi later helped in Italy's struggle for independence from Austria. So he was born, not the least bit hyperbolically, into drama. His father, Carlo, was the local innkeeper and grocer. I have seen Le Roncole, and as late as 1956 it was only a crossroads with a few houses, a sort of general store and post office, and Verdi's birthplace, unchanged but now, naturally, a monument. Not a great deal is known about Carlo Verdi, but he must have had some perception because he saw early that his son was too good for the local music teacher and transferred him to a school in Busseto, a town three miles away. (Busseto, the town where—on a Verdi pilgrimage—I ate a meal that nearly gave me ptomaine! Verdi, who grew to hate Busseto later in life, would have warned me about it.) There Verdi met the man who can be called the single most important influence in his life.

Antonio Barezzi was a prosperous grocer—in fact, he supplied Verdi's father—and a devout amateur of music. A couple of years after the boy began studying in Busseto, Barezzi took him into his home, employed him, and helped his studies with a man who was the organist of the Busseto cathedral and director of the Philharmonic Society. The young Verdi also played duets with Barezzi's daughter, Margherita.

Still young, only eighteen, Verdi went to Milan in 1832, partly financed by Barezzi and partly by a Busseto institution, in order to enter the Milan Conservatory. He was rejected. He went to a private teacher in Milan and worked hard, perhaps especially hard to demonstrate the conservatory's error. Then, in late 1833 or early 1834, came a stroke of luck—"luck" being defined for an artist as a chance to show the talent that has nothing to do with luck but might wither

By STANLEY KAUFFMANN

without it. A group of Milanese amateurs was rehearsing Haydn's *Creation*, and Verdi used to attend rehearsals. One day none of the three conductors appeared, and the young man sitting in a corner of the hall was asked simply to sit at the piano and fill in as accompanist. "I accepted," he wrote some forty years later, "and sat down at the piano to begin. I remember very well the ironical smiles that passed among those dilettantes. My youthful face, my scrawny figure, and my poor clothes commanded but little respect. However, the rehearsal began, and little by little I began to warm to it. Then as my excitement grew, I stopped merely accompanying, and began to conduct with my right hand while I played with my left." Result: the absent maestri were forgotten, and Verdi was asked to conduct the public performances. Further result: he was asked to write an opera for this society.

Verdi was delighted, but he was delayed. His old teacher back in Busseto died, and Verdi, who had obligations to the town, was recalled to take over the local Philharmonic Society. During the following four and a half years his future might have seemed predictable: a provincial musician had gone up to the big city for training and now returned to his home town to spend his life. Verdi composed some occasional music, ran the Philharmonic Society, and continued working, when he could, on his opera. Also, he resumed playing duets with Margherita Barezzi. In 1836, when she was seventeen, they married, and even that seemed like one more strand in a conventional tale: rising hometown boy weds wealthy patron's daughter.

But Verdi was Verdi, and the story altered. He finished his opera, *Oberto, Conte di San Bonifacio*, whose libretto by Piazza was revised by his friend Temistocle Solera. He finished his contractual obligations in Busseto. He took his wife and his baby son to Milan. (Another child, a daughter, had died just after the boy was born.)

Oberto was produced at La Scala, Milan, in November of 1839 with moderate success—enough success to bring him a contract for three more operas from the director of La Scala. Then came a cruel paradox too horrible to be called ironic. His small son had died just before *Oberto* was produced. The first of his new operas was to be a comedy. While he was writing it, Margherita died, in June of 1840. He managed to finish the comic opera *Un Giorno di Regno* (*A Day's Reign*), and it was produced in September. The wonder is not that it was not very good but that he was able to finish at all. It could not have surprised Verdi, possibly it did not even interest him, that it was a failure.

Again it might have seemed that his future was predictable. He thought his career was over. What was worse, he didn't care. Here, one might have thought, was a young musician who had had a flurry of attention but had been broken by both professional failure and personal tragedy. Perhaps he would go home to Busseto and survive by giving music lessons; perhaps he would not manage to survive at all.

That winter he was still in Milan, in obscure lodgings, doing nothing. (He himself told the story, in the autobiographical sketch he wrote in 1879.) One evening, as snow was falling, he was walking through the streets and accidentally met Merelli, the head of La Scala. Merelli, who had refused Verdi's request to be released from his contract with the opera house, asked Verdi to walk with him as far as his office. On the way Merelli told him about a "pigheaded" composer who had just declined a libretto by Solera and wanted something else. Verdi offered a libretto that had been prepared for him and that he would never need. Merelli, whose mind was obviously spinning away busily, said that this was a marvelous idea and while they walked he talked Verdi into the theatre and his office. There he took out the manuscript that the other composer had rejected and suggested that Verdi take it along with him.

"What should I do with it?" Verdi replied. "No. no, I am not in the mood for reading librettos."

"Eh! It won't bite you, will it? Read it and then you can give it back to me."

Merelli forced the manuscript into Verdi's hands. The young composer left and started back through the snow to his lodgings. He says:

> On the way home I felt a kind of indefinable malaise, a very deep sadness, a distress that filled my heart. I got home and with an almost violent gesture threw the manuscript on the table. . . . The book had opened in falling on the table; without knowing how, I gazed at the page that lay before me and read this line: *Va, pensiero, sull' ali dorate.*

"Go, thought, on golden wings." It is the first line of the chorus of exiled Jews—in *Nabucco*. That line served as the slender filament that tugged Verdi back to life. Although he made another effort to return the libretto, something had stirred again in him: "One day one verse, another day another, here a note and there a phrase, little by little the opera was composed."

Here is a simple dramatic fact, to which no flourish need be added. Sixty years later, at Verdi's funeral, the immense crowd spontaneously began to sing that chorus of exiled Jews—singing, at the very end of his giant career, the lines that had brought him back to music.

He finished *Nabucco* (which was his own irreverent shortening of *Nabucodonosor*—Nebuchadnezzar), in the autumn of 1841. It was produced in March, 1842, and—to keep this story incredible one need only stick to the facts—it was an overwhelming success. "The public went mad," says his biographer, Francis Toye.

Verdi's career, from that point, went up and up, though not unvariedly so. *Nabucco* made him famous in Italy: ties, hats, and sauces were named for him. His next opera, *I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata* (*The Lombards at the First Crusade*), also from a Solera libretto, was produced eleven months after *Nabucco*. (*I Lombardi* was, in curious fact, the first Verdi opera produced in America—New York, March, 1847.)

His next opera, *Ernani*, marked two changes in his career. It was his first

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In one of many moods captured in Melchiorre Delfico's caricatures of Verdi, our hero (feeling grim) arrives in Naples in 1858 with his mistress, her poodle, and their porters to oversee an opera.

opera based on a famous play—his new librettist Francesco Piave had drawn the book from Victor Hugo's *Hernani*—and it was the first opera he wrote for a theatre outside Milan. *Ernani* had its première at La Fenice in Venice in March, 1844. A few months later it was produced in Vienna, where Donizetti was director of the Italian Opera, and soon after was performed in other countries. *Ernani* was the work that made Verdi an international figure, but it also insured his stature as a hero in Italy, since his work continued to get in trouble with the Austrian governors' censors. (One chorus in *I Lombardi* had evoked a patriotic demonstration.)

Before the year was out he emphasized these two career changes: he produced *I Due Foscari* (*The Two Foscari*) in Rome, November, 1844, and his librettist, Piave, drew the book from Byron's play. No composer that I know drew so consistently on established dramatists. This is no guarantee of successful operas, but it certainly shows some sense of dramatic aspiration. Among Verdi's sources are Schiller (*Giovanna d'Arco, Don Carlo, I Masnadieri, Luisa Miller*), Voltaire (*Alzira*), Victor Hugo again (*Rigoletto*), Dumas *fils* (*La Traviata*), and, of course, Shakespeare (*Macbeth, Otello,* and *Falstaff*).

Note, too, an element common in his day and country, uncommon in ours. He wrote for specific theatres, for specific use. Writing a piece and then looking for an outlet only began during Verdi's lifetime. Composers in various countries wrote for various uses, but in Italy the dominant form was opera. The writing of new operas for opera houses every year was almost comparable to the writing of new plays for dramatic theatres today. In 1820, for instance, La Scala had eleven works in repertory, four of which were premières—today an unbelievable proportion. In the biographies of Verdi there is no clear statement of what first attracted him to opera, except his own comment that he was delighted when the first libretto was offered him in Milan; but it could almost be said that, for an Italian talent of his day, it would have been more remarkable if he had not been drawn to opera.

This theatrical vocation meant for Verdi, as for all composers to whom opera has meant more than grinding out stage fodder, a concern with story, structure, characterization, and language that sometimes surprises those today who vaguely assume that the librettos were somehow always there and the verses unimportant. Verdi's correspondence with his librettists quickly proves the opposite: "The phrase must have a turn that grips you!" he wrote to one. "Theatre . . . theatre!" More to the recurrent point of his concern with theatre was his continuing struggle with production problems, and especially with singers. As soon as he had enough reputation to stand up to opera stars, who requested alterations from composers at their whim, he did so.

After his Roman production of *Due Foscari*, it was all of three months before Verdi produced another opera—in February, 1845, at Milan: *Giovanna d'Arco* (*Joan of Arc*), which Solera based on Schiller's *Maid of Orléans*. (This is where my own experience enters the chronicle; it is the first of the works so far mentioned that I have seen staged. I saw *Giovanna* in Paris in 1951, with a new singer named Renata Tebaldi, and three things are memorable about it: Tebaldi was wonderful; a love scene between Giovanna and King Charles was so inappropriate that it had a naive charm; and I can't recall one note of the music.) The most interesting point about *Giovanna* is that, like so much of Verdi's work then, it had censorship trouble. It dealt with a subjugated country struggling for freedom, so when it was done in Palermo in 1847, the libretto had to be revised, the setting transposed to ancient Greece, and the title changed to *Orietta of Lesbos*.

One more reason that I love Verdi is that his next opera, called *Alzira* and based on Voltaire's tragedy *Alzire, ou les Américains* (set in sixteenth-century Peru), is by common consent his worst. This was Verdi's eighth opera (discounting an early lost opera, before *Oberto*, called *Rocester*). I respond to the fact that this man was human enough to do his worst work after he was already famous; and I respond, too, to the fact that seven months later, in March, 1846, he produced *Attila* with somewhat more success.

Just a year later came the première of his tenth opera, *Macbeth*, his first from the dramatist who was his lifelong passion. "I prefer Shakespeare to every other dramatist," he said once, "the Greeks not excepted." Verdi's *Macbeth* may be the earliest work of his to have recurrent life in the contemporary world repertory; I have seen two productions, one in New York (not at the Metropolitan) and one in Rome.

Verdi was now in his mid-thirties, and the operas poured out. His next, *I Masnadieri*, based on Schiller's *The Brigands*, was written for Her Majesty's Theatre, London, and was produced there in July, 1847, four months after *Macbeth* opened in Florence. (One more reason for loving Verdi: I share his

opinion of the city of London. "If only London had the climate of Naples," he once wrote, "there would be no need to sigh for paradise.") A whole enormous fifteen months elapsed before the next première (*Il Corsaro, The Corsair,* Trieste); then only three months until the next (*La Battaglia di Legnano, The Battle of Legnano,* Rome); eleven months until the next (*Luisa Miller,* Naples); eleven months until the next (*Stiffelio,* Trieste); then after four more months, yet another work premièred, this one in Venice in March of 1851.

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Verdi, at the keyboard, rehearses with two peevish singers, left, and a smug soprano, myopic tenor, and ebullient baritone, right.

It was *Rigoletto*—his second opera with a libretto by Piave based on a Victor Hugo play. Because it is the earliest of his works that is still widely played, we think of it as early Verdi. It was his seventeenth opera. He was thirty-eight.

Take, as instance of his developing theatre sense, the very subject of *Rigoletto.* To us it is simply "an opera." But the play itself had caused a scandal when it was first produced in Paris; and to choose as protagonist of an opera the hunchbacked accessory to a libertine's vices, a father who unwittingly assists in his daughter's ravishing and then her murder—that called for convictions about theatre in advance of contemporary notions.

Take, as musical instance of that same theatre sense, just one example. In Act II the hunchbacked jester at the duke's court is pretending to be at work amusing the courtiers but is actually trying to learn where his daughter is; discovering that the duke has her inside, he bursts out in rage at the courtiers; then, realizing his impotence, he breaks down and appeals to them for help. Any composer who knows musical grammar could have written music that was first bantering, then irate, then suppliant. Verdi's distinction is that his music goes far past the appropriate basic colors: he has the power to invent melody that is in itself lovely at the same time that it takes the theatrical requirement of the moment to its quintessence. The only reason we don't gasp with wonder every time we hear this three-part scene of Rigoletto's is that it is so good: we now take its power so familiarly that we somehow assume it was easy to do.

Shortly before this première Verdi's personal life began to be "visible." He had been a widower since 1840; about 1848 he began to live with a retired singer, Giuseppina Strepponi, whom he had known since the *Oberto* days and who had become his friend when she sang in the first production of *Nabucco* in 1842. For reasons of health she had eased herself out of an operatic career and moved to Paris where she gave singing lessons. When Verdi was in Paris on business, they met again, joined lives, and remained joined for fifty years.

Peppina, as Verdi called her, was three years younger than he and, according to Frank Walker, a Verdi scholar, had borne two illegitimate children to a man from whom she had long ago separated. (Little is known of those children; they did not live with her and presumably died young.) Certainly Verdi loved and honored her; eleven years later, he married her.

The delay in marriage may, in a sense, have been Peppina's doing. In his thirties, Verdi had no liking for life in the countryside, but she persuaded him at least to live in Busseto. There, it may well have been the proximity to his adored former father-in-law, Barezzi, that inhibited Verdi from remarrying. It was during this period that he grew to dislike the people of Busseto for their behavior toward Peppina. Nevertheless he bought an estate, the Villa Sant' Agata, near Busseto, eventually married Peppina, and they made Sant' Agata their principal residence from then on.

To visit Sant' Agata, as I have done, is to realize forcefully a particularity in Verdi. He was born in Le Roncole, grew up in Busseto, and spent a great deal of his life at this villa—and all of these places are within just a few miles of one another.

Avoiding sentimentality about his love of the people (he had troubles with them) or his love of the land (he went through some disaffection with it), still we can see how important the countryside of his birth was to him, and can infer what a rooted feeling it gave him—maybe just because he could quarrel with the townsfolk in their own dialect. I don't argue that one can hear the Po Valley in his music. But I think it reasonable to believe that his sense of identity was linked with this region and that his identity gave him assurance, just as his (larger) Italianness gave him affinity with an age of opera that his very affinity enriched.

Technically Verdi was a citizen of the Duchy of Parma until Italy was united, and it is as such a citizen that he—without exaggeration—can be said to have written. In 1873 he composed his glorious *Requiem Mass* in honor of the Italian novelist and patriot Alessandro Manzoni. (Though Verdi was no devout Catholic, I think it not blasphemous to say that the "theatre" of the mass was more sacred to him than its theological components.) When the score was published, Hans von Bülow, the conductor associated with Wagner, disparaged the mass as operatic. Johannes Brahms then sent for the score, studied it, and said, "Bülow has made an ass of

himself. Verdi's *Requiem* is a work of genius." What I think Bülow deplored and Brahms recognized was the Po peasant of genius singing the timeless texts in his own specifically Italian voice. This is what a visitor feels—or at least believes he feels—as he stands at the gates of Sant' Agata.

Verdi lived and worked. Then when people thought he might die or at least was played out, he lived and worked some more. After *Rigoletto* came *Il Trovatore* (*The Troubador*), now a war-horse of the repertory—but how many composers have supplied war-horses? Then came another great act of daring, *La Traviata* (hard to translate—*The Strayed Woman*, perhaps). Alexandre Dumas *fils* had produced his *La Dame aux Camélias* in February, 1852, in Paris; Verdi saw the play and reportedly became wildly enthusiastic about it at once. Today we have small appreciation of the daring it required in 1852, first, to make an opera of a contemporary play (it was not a costume piece when it was first done) and, second, to choose a drama about the sufferings and sacrifices of a sympathetic courtesan. Frank Walker cites an Italian critic who "has suggested a possible reflection, or sublimation, in this opera of Verdi's personal relationship" with Peppina and with Barezzi, who was not yet reconciled to her. They were both quite unlike the opera's characters, the courtesan Violetta, and her lover's father, Germont senior, but what does apply, certainly, is Verdi's recognition of worth in a woman who lives unconventionally. Francis Toye says that *La Traviata* (which opened in Venice, March, 1853—one year after the play's première) "became the symbol of revolt against current sexual conventions." Today that aspect of the opera is antique; the importance of *La Traviata*—for me, at any rate—is that it is Verdi's first perfect work, absolutely unflawed, crystalline genius from first note to last, a musical rendition of romantic drama—not realistic rebellion—so pure that its romance becomes a reality.

With previous Verdi works and even with some that follow, there are moments when I think, "Ah, yes, that's where he came from and what he was better than." In a way I can even enjoy those moments—what better example than the Anvil Chorus in *Il Trovatore*?—because they are such *good* old-fashioned stuff and because, by contrast, they reveal the dimensions of the material around them. But there are no such moments in *La Traviata*. Every moment is nineteenth-century Italian opera, but every moment is that school of opera at its purest pinnacle. The Prelude to Act I, after its opening moment asks gently for our attention, sings its famous melody in the strings; but is it a mere lush "operatic" melody? Only in the hands of a ham orchestra. Otherwise it is the very idea of the dramatic-through-the-lyric, the module of which so many other composers provide only barrel-organ imitations. (And Verdi's prodigality of invention is exemplified by the fact that he later uses this melody only once, very briefly, when Violetta says goodbye to Alfredo in Act II. Just suppose Puccini had been lucky enough to think of that theme. He would have banged it at us for three tedious hours.)

The drinking song in Act I, Alfredo's declaration of love, Violetta's suspicion that she may love him—all these enlarge what might have been conventional exercises into music drama because the composer takes the scene with utter seriousness and has the gift to go beneath conventional musical strophe to make the scene archetypal of the feelings it contains. I have no favorite passage in *La Traviata*, but let us look at one more moment: the scene between the elder Germont and Violetta in Act II. Dramatically it represents the complete conversion, in a relatively short time, of Violetta's attitude toward her affair with Alfredo. The material, in the harsh glare of textual analysis, is sheer lavender: a courtesan being asked to give up her lover for the sake of his innocent sister's good name. But Verdi, with his intensity of conviction (remember, it was daring material then), makes the scene survive as viable theatre; then, with breathtakingly *specific* invention, takes it past the merely viable to the overpowering with one unbelievably beautiful melody after another. This is what I would call perfection in opera: the dramatic, fixed and magnified through music.

Between 1855 and 1867 Verdi wrote the five works sometimes called the "dark" operas: *I Vespri Siciliani* (*The Sicilian Vespers*), which was recently and clumsily revived by the Metropolitan Opera; *Simon Boccanegra*; *Un Ballo in Maschera* (*The Masked Ball*); *La Forza del Destino* (*The Force of Destiny*); and *Don Carlo*. (Of *La Forza*, Pierre Boulez has said, "If anybody asked me to conduct [it], I'd much rather go for a walk." Permission granted!—by anyone who has ever heard Toscanini's recording of the overture.) Why did Verdi produce only five new works in twelve years? One could say that he also did extensive revisions of two earlier operas, and that *La Forza* was commissioned by the Imperial Theatre of Saint Petersburg, to which Verdi had to make two arduous journeys.

But there are other reasons, I think—both for the reduced output and for the melancholy tinge, indefinable but recognizably different from the drama of the earlier days. First, middle age. Verdi entered his fifties during this period, and no doubt felt the energy changes and rue of spirit that often attend that age. Second, the 1860's were a period of tremendous political turbulence and warfare in Italy, too complex to summarize here. (Audiences under Austrian governors used to shout "Viva Verdi" with two meanings: first, the obvious one; second, his name happened to be an acronym for Vittorio Emmanuele Re d'Italia—Victor Emmanuel, King of Italy—the man they wanted as king of a free and united homeland.) In fact, during this time Verdi took a relatively complete holiday from music for two years to devote himself to politics. After Parma was joined by plebiscite to Piedmont, Verdi was induced, much against his will, to run for office in the Chamber of Deputies at

Turin. He was elected, and served from 1860 to 1865 as a devoted follower of the great leader of the Risorgimento, Count Camillo Cavour, whose policies he supported even after Cavour died in 1861.

Another possible reason can be given for the diminution and darkening of activity: although Verdi for a while had been a god in Italy and in much of Europe, through the 1860's a rival god appeared in the North, Richard Wagner. Admiration for Wagner's work began to infiltrate Italy, particularly among the young, and increasingly Verdi was mocked, even calumniated. He held himself above the battle—and indeed, years later, wrote a very touching letter when Wagner died—but he was disturbed.

For some or all of these reasons there were four years of musical silence after *Don Carlo,* the longest silent period in Verdi's career up to that time. Then, in 1868, he was approached by the Khedive of Egypt to write an opera for the opening of the Suez Canal. Verdi got a libretto in French prose from Camille du Locle that was turned into Italian verse by Antonio Ghislanzoni, and at last *Aïda* was produced in Cairo in December, 1871. Two months later it was produced at La Scala, Milan, with gigantic success, although—much to Verdi's hurt—some attributed his fuller, richer use of the orchestra to the influence of Wagner.

Under everything, however, Verdi remained the stubborn, dryly humorous peasant. When *Aïda* was performed at Parma in May, 1872, Verdi got a letter from a man who lived nearby. He had made two trips to Parma, he said, had seen *Aïda* twice, hadn't liked it, and was enclosing a bill for two round-trip tickets, two theatre tickets, and two "detestable suppers" at the station. Verdi instructed his publisher, Ricordi, to pay the bill, deducting only the price of meals the man would have had to eat anyway, all on condition that the man sign a formal document promising never to attend any Verdi operas in the future. The document was drawn up and executed, the money refunded.

In 1873 Verdi wrote the *Requiem*, easily the best of his few works outside the theatre, conducted it in Milan in 1874, then conducted it in Paris, London, and Vienna. He was sixty-two. Vittorio Emmanuele, now king, made him an honorary senator; though Verdi accepted, he never attended congressional sessions. Many thought, and he more or less agreed, that his public life was finished. He revised *Simon Boccanegra,* he conducted *Aïda* in Paris, but he wrote nothing new.

Yet again Verdi surprised the world. In 1879 he met an extraordinary man twenty-nine years his junior—Arrigo Boito, a half-Italian, half-Polish poet and in his own right a composer. (His opera *Mefistofele* is still performed.) He had once written an anti-Verdi poem, but was now not only contrite but thoroughly converted to Verdi's music. They discussed the possibility of an opera based on *Othello*; three days later Boito produced a sketch for the libretto, and seven years later the opera was finished. Many think, with justice, that Boito gave Verdi the best opera libretto ever written. As for the music, the least that can be said of it is that it is worthy of the libretto. (Bernard Shaw wrote that Verdi's success with *Otello* "proves, not that he could occupy Shakespeare's plane, but that Shakespeare could on occasion occupy his." Well, by such a measure from such a measurer, that seems praise enough.)

Otello was first performed at La Scala, Milan, in February, 1887. Toye records that the oldest of theatrical tributes was accorded Verdi after the première. "When the composer left the theatre, a crowd of admirers, who throughout the day had lined the streets to applaud his every appearance, unharnessed the horses from his carriage and drew it to the Hotel di Milano, where he always stayed."

And *still* he was not finished. Let us acknowledge the last miracle quickly. With the aid of another superb libretto from Boito, Verdi six years later produced *Falstaff* (from *The Merry Wives of Windsor*)—again at La Scala, in February of 1893. He was seventy-nine. Remember that, not only when the music's comic vitality bursts out at you from the very first phrase but when you hear Fenton's love song in Act III, that lifting lyric of poeticized desire. (Evidently, and this is not rare, Verdi felt brighter at seventy-nine than fifty-five.)

He lived another eight years. He died on January 27, 1901, in that same Hotel di Milano. Peppina, wife and strength for most of his life, had been dead for nearly four years.

He bequeathed most of his money, the future royalties from his operas, his piano, and his first spinet to the home for destitute musicians that he himself had built in Milan; and he directed that he and Peppina were to be buried side by side in the oratory of that home, which is where they are.

In 1876 Verdi wrote to a friend: "It may be a good thing to copy reality; but to invent reality is much, much better."

It is the statement of a man who understands that reality is not necessarily mimesis of actuality; reality, in art, may lie in constructed systems that deploy experience at the maker's will in order to illuminate our lives. And Verdi understands, in contrast to the usual cant, that life is not necessarily "more important" than art. First, art is inseparably part of life; second, it is the part of life where the best that man can conceive is attainable: design, purpose, meaningful comedy, meaningful tragedy—instead of the kinds of comedy and tragedy that we usually face in the world around us.

Verdi's life was hardly an ivory-tower existence, as we have seen, yet there is the feeling that art is where he really existed. He was in some ways modest—he often said he was "not a learned composer" or some variant thereof; but he was furiously committed. And underneath his painstaking work with librettists, his difficulties with managers and singers and conductors, his passion for finish in every detail, there lies, I think, this passion for the "real" reality. Life, he says, is nonsense without art, and art is nonsense unless it is absolutely the

very best that one can make it. That possibility of perfection is the reality of art, available only in art.

That passion drives through the story of his life. But other great artists—Rembrandt, Keats, Joyce, to name a few—had the same passion. Why the special appeal of Verdi? Why, to speak personally, is he "my" Verdi, as evidently he has been to millions? (Igor Stravinsky said, "How I would like to have known him!")

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Brandishing his conductor's baton, Verdi, in a snit, drives a pack of annoying intruders out of the Teátro San Carlo, Naples.

One reason is Verdi was a true man of the theatre. That phrase is often cheaply used, as if it were grandly self-justifying. Here is one attempt to explain it: the man of the theatre is an artist for whom experience is clarified and consciousness is extended through conflict, for whom agon is the means to order out of chaos. Unlike such artists as the lyric poet and the novelist, the theatre artist's radical perception is of truth approached through a line of rising tensions to conflict and to change. Fundamentally, the test of the theatre artist's quality is whether he sees experience that way, inevitably and surely, or whether he has to adjust experience to that perception, to work on it. Fundamentally, it is this vision of life as truthful through drama, rather than life as material for drama, that distinguishes the great theatre artist from the merely good or worse. Nietzsche said:

> Only artists, and especially those of the theatre, have given men eyes and ears to see and hear with some pleasure what each man *is* himself. . . . Only they have taught us . . . the art of staging and watching ourselves. . . . Without this art we would be nothing but foreground and would live entirely in the spell of that perspective which makes what is closest at hand and most vulgar appear as if it were vast, and reality itself.

That truer perspective, which tells us where reality begins to exist, was in Verdi.

But why is it so powerful in Verdi? Why is his theatre art, practiced through music, so commanding and irresistible? Foremost in the answer, as far as the answer can be given in words, is his melody. We are supposed to be a bit embarrassed about that term these days; the term "theme" is more chic (and often the theme is an arrangement of sounds that could be otherwise arranged without harm). But if Verdi's melodies, as melodies, did not appeal—at once and always—we would not be talking about him. His work would be as dead as that of his jealous rival Saverio Mercadante, whose sixty operas are completely forgotten. All discussion of Verdi's gravity and growth, even of his orchestral virtues on which many good critics insist, would not begin to exist without the first, and immediate, appeal of his melody.

It is dynamic melody. It comments and characterizes as it moves. It delights but is meant to do more than delight: it is intended to grow, to take you from one point to another like a passage of poetic drama, to leave you changed. What the great Verdi singers know, what Toscanini knew so wonderfully, is that no aria, no phrase of Verdi is over until the very end. The *line* must be held, rising to the conclusion. He writes, so to speak, in periodic sentences. All of it is beautiful, but none of it is fully beautiful until it reaches the end for which it has been made beautiful, and the dramatic reality is complete.

We often say, rightly, that Verdi touches the heart, that his music embraces the whole range of feelings in us. This swift immediacy, this ease of access to us exists—in his case, at least—because he was a popular artist working in a (then) popular art. Essentially that is what comes through his music, I think, through his life. He was, like Shakespeare, a popular artist in both senses—of the people and for the people. Excepting a few film makers in the century to come, he was the last great genius in Western cultural history to create for a wide audience, not for a cultivated elite. He wrote with such intensity and depth that he transcended popular conventions without forsaking them; he built on them (like Shakespeare) and grew, from a national artist very much of his time, to a world artist for all foreseeable time. When we love Verdi, possibly we are responding to the fact that he was of an age when the very best could be for the most; possibly we are responding to the warm sense of community that supports and empowers him.

The FM radio plays while I read and, absorbed in my book, I stupidly "waste" the good music. Then they put on a Verdi record—Claudia Muzio singing "Addío del passato" from the last act of *Traviata*—and the book drops in my hands. The composer has given the singing actress the means to tear me away. The little squash-hatted peasant has included me in his command that we leave our lives for the truth of our lives through drama. Muzio sings her last sudden high note—no, utters her last cry—and the strings beat softly, quickly, to a close. And I am left, hungry, in the reality outside that music, the lesser reality in which, most of the time, I live.

Stanley Kauffmann, who has written a series of articles for HORIZON *on "Landmarks of Film History," received the George Jean Nathan Award for drama criticism.*

Montaigne's "Monstrous Plan"

It was to essay something quite new: to look into his heart and write—with, as it were, his life's blood

The most difficult feats sometimes seem the easiest. There is one in particular that, to all appearances, anyone should be able to perform; but when it was first accomplished, it marked a new beginning in man's spiritual history. This feat, or enterprise, is to bring to mind what your life has taught you and what, in consequence, you genuinely and truly know—not opinions received from books, not preachments and formal doctrines, but the opinions you really live by; not the homilies on the surface of your mind ("respect the rights of others," "beauty is only skin deep"), but the real suppositions under which you act when you choose a friend, break a vow, pay a debt, get married, spank a child, labor arduously, idle languidly, love, hate, lament, resent, forgive, repine, and so on and on through all the moral stuff that fills even the quietest life. All that the enterprise requires, then, is that you learn from yourself what you already know. Alas, there is a hitch. The enterprise is so difficult that only one man fully succeeded at it: Michel Eyquem de Montaigne. He was also—and therein lies his true greatness—the man who invented the enterprise.

That he was "essaying" (hence his book's title, *Essays*) something utterly and even scandalously original, Montaigne himself was keenly, and nervously, aware. Before him, other men—Saint Augustine, for example—had thought to examine their own hearts, but they had done so to fortify an already established doctrine or to point up a well-worn moral. Montaigne reversed the procedure: at a time when few authors wrote of themselves at all, he not only proposed to speak intimately of

himself ("Many things I would not tell anyone, I tell the public; and for my secret knowledge and thoughts I send my most faithful friends to a bookseller's shop"), but to make of himself the very source and measure of moral philosophy, as if the ways of an undistinguished country gentleman from Bordeaux were more worthy of contemplation than the ethics of Aristotle, the canons of Epictetus, or the high reaches of Christian theology. "I shall never get out of this stupid enterprise with honor," the apprehensive author warned his readers. "I presented myself to myself as theme and subject. It is a wild and monstrous plan."

The "monstrous plan" was not yet born when Montaigne, a wealthy retired gentleman of thirty-eight, sat down in 1571 to fill out his ample leisure time with some learned scribbling. His intentions at first were conventional enough: in the high tide of the French Renaissance what better hobby could a well-read country squire adopt than to pen moral reflections drawn from ancient authorities and so add his voice to the chorus of antiquity admirers? Besides, Montaigne had little else to do. He was a country squire in rank and property only. He could not, he tells us, "carve at table worth a rap, or saddle a horse, or properly carry a bird, or release it, or talk to dogs, birds or horses." His indifference to the business of his estate ("What would I not do rather than read a contract?") was matched by his almost comical ignorance: "Not a month ago," he tells his readers, "I was caught ignorant that leaven was used to make bread, and what was meant by fermenting wine." Personal remarks such as these, be it noted, played small part in Montaigne's first essays, which were, on the whole, conventional Renaissance moral commentaries: admiration of ancient virtues, reflections on suffering pain with composure and facing death with dignity—the stock in trade of what historians call Stoic Humanism, the prevailing moral doctrine of the age.

Montaigne continued on the well-trodden path for about a year or so, and then it seems that he made a pregnant discovery. The Stoic philosophy, with its high and chilling standards of courage and will power, made Montaigne feel acutely inadequate. Others, no doubt, felt the same, but Montaigne at least had the courage of his unheroism, which was nothing less than the courage of genius. It seemed to him that his sense of inadequacy, inspired by Stoic philosophy, was truer to his life and more important to him than the philosophy. "This too is a subject on which I exercise my judgment. . . ."

By WALTER KARP

Instead of measuring himself by the Stoic philosophy, Montaigne began, albeit slowly, to measure the philosophy by himself, and the monstrous plan began taking shape. After all, as he later observed, "the firmest and most general ideas I have are those which, in a manner of speaking, were born with me." Judged inwardly by those "firmest and most general ideas," which he discovered, he said, by "deciphering myself," the great moral philosophy of antiquity looked curiously fatuous. Why must he, who dreaded pain, suffer it with *composure*? What kind of philosophy goes "playing around with these vain and external experiences as if it were training men for acting in a comedy?" Why not cry out if we feel like it? "We have enough labor with the pain without adding a new labor by our reason."

In truth, this queer enterprise of deciphering himself was beginning to look more fruitful than book philosophy. Perhaps it was even truer. "Things in themselves have their own weights and measures and qualities; but once inside, within us, she [the soul] allots them their qualities as she sees fit. Death is frightful to Cicero, desirable to Cato, a matter of indifference to Socrates. Health, conscience, authority, knowledge, riches, beauty and their opposites—all are stripped on entry and receive from the soul new clothing, and the coloring that she chooses. . . . Wherefore let us no longer make the external qualities of things our excuse; it is up to us to reckon them as we will."

What Montaigne truly thought and felt about the inward aspect of things was richer, more various, more true to the texture of lived life, than anything to be found in vaunting philosophy with its moral abstractions and its "transcendental humors." The *eruditi* discoursed, say, on ambition, but Montaigne discovered by deciphering himself that "the only thing I hope to acquire is a reputation for acquiring nothing." The philosophers discoursed on public virtue; Montaigne brought the subject home: "Whoever escapes with clean breeches from handling the affairs of the world, escapes by a miracle." Forget the inimitable purity of Cato the Younger: "The virtue assigned to the affairs of the world is a virtue with many bends, angles and elbows, so as to join and adapt itself to human weakness; mixed, and artificial, not straight, clean, constant or purely innocent." The nobility discoursed on courtliness; Montaigne, having been a courtier in his time, knew a thing or two about that: "When I have come to hold the ear of the great with offices of weight, I have often put them to the trouble of asking me to modulate my voice." Theologians discoursed on the state of marriage: "A dull uniform pleasure," pronounced Montaigne after pondering his own.

Humanists talked of pleasure and pain while Montaigne, deciphering himself, made a thousand discoveries about real pleasures and real pains: the interrelations between great wealth and toothaches, and between logic and the gout; discoveries about the small sweetnesses of life that every man enjoyed but about which philosophy kept silent, as if reason itself were too haughty to recognize the small dignities and harmless vanities by which men actually lived. "We seek other conditions because we do not understand the use of our own, and go outside of ourselves because we do not know what it is like inside. Yet there is no use our mounting on stilts, for on stilts we must still walk on our own legs. And on the loftiest throne in the world we are still sitting only on our own rump."

By 1577 Montaigne, according to his biographer, Donald Frame, was fully launched on his monstrous plan. Though he was worried about its reception, he was fully convinced of its inherent worth. "Each man is a very good education to himself, provided he has the capacity to spy on himself from close up." That provision is, of course, the mysterious hitch in the plan. Even Montaigne, perhaps to his own surprise, found the enterprise difficult, as every one of his innumerable followers has since discovered for himself. "It is a thorny undertaking, and more so than it seems, to follow a movement so wandering as that of our mind, to penetrate the opaque depths of its innermost folds, to pick out and immobilize the innumerable flutterings that agitate it." And, Montaigne might have added, to sort out what he truly knew from what he had merely taken in. His celebrated skepticism was really a tool—a crane—for lifting from his mind the burden of book philosophy.

Until his death in 1592 Montaigne continued to amplify his original collection of essays, adding new ones for the edition of 1588 and stuffing the old ones with fresh discoveries and illustrations. Penetrating "the opaque depths" of his own mind, he had discovered a richness there that no one had ever dreamed existed, trained as we are to "borrow and beg." There are no empty claims in Montaigne's essays. When he assures us that "You can tie up all moral philosophy with a common and private life just as well as with a life of richer stuff," the essays in all their vivid concreteness are there as eternal proof—proof that "each man bears the entire form of man's estate," proof that merely to have lived we have learned much and to have lived "appropriately" we have accomplished much, and that "All other things, ruling, hoarding, building, are only little appendages and props, at most."

"We are each richer than we think." That is Montaigne's ultimate discovery, the sweet ripe fruit of his "wild and monstrous plan." By some strange quirk or fatality in the human condition, the opaque depths remain for the rest of us virtually impenetrable. Even with Montaigne as our mentor, the hardest thing to discover is what we already know. Our riches, so to speak, are locked up in trust, although it is a pleasure and a harmless vanity to know—as Montaigne has taught us—that they are there even if out of reach. Is it an empty sort of vanity? To that, too, Montaigne had an answer: "Well, what of it?" for "the most barbarous of our maladies is to hate and disdain our being."

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GUNPOWDER PLOT EXPOSED

Three hundred and seventy years ago a man who schemed to blow up King James I was tortured and hanged—only to be immortalized in that jolly annual romp, Guy Fawkes Day. But was the wrong man immortalized?

By HUGH ROSS WILLIAMSON

Eight of the alleged conspirators appear in an engraving published shortly after the discovery of the plot.

At seven o'clock on the evening of Saturday, October 26, 1605, thirty-year-old William Parker, fourth baron of Monteagle, was about to sit down to supper in his mansion at Hoxton, a village five miles or so from London, when one of his footmen, whom he had sent out on an errand, approached him with the news that he had been "met by an unknown man of a reasonable tall personage who delivered him a letter, charging him to put it in my Lord his master's hands."

The Letter

Monteagle broke the seal and started to read the letter. It was written in an unknown and somewhat illegible hand, without signature or date, and he called a member of his household to help him decipher it. It had no punctuation, no capital letters, and several misspellings. Correcting these for the modern reader's convenience, the anonymous letter ran:

"My Lord, out of the love I bear to some of your friends I have a care for your preservation; therefore I would advise you, as you tender your life, to devise some excuse to shift of your attendance at this Parliament; for God and man hath concurred to punish the wickedness of this time. And think not slightly of this advertisement but retire yourself into your own country where you may expect the event in safety; for, though there be no appearance of any stir, yet I say they shall receive a terrible blow, this Parliament, and yet they shall not see who hurts them. This counsel is not to be condemned because it may do you good and can do you no harm, for the danger is past as soon as you have burnt the letter and I hope God will give you the grace to make good use of it, to Whose holy protection I commend you."

Although "somewhat perplexed what construction to make of it," Monteagle, according to the official report, "as a most dutiful and loyal subject did conclude not to conceal it. Whereupon not withstanding the lateness and darkness of the night in that season of the year, he presently [immediately] repaired to His Majesty's palace at Whitehall and there delivered the same to Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, His Majesty's principal Secretary." The letter held no surprises for Cecil. Not only had he written it; he was expecting it. For the Catholic Lord Monteagle was his tool in this, the most spectacular "frame-up" in British history.

The letter to Monteagle was read by two men. One was the little hunchback Robert Cecil, and the other—"the wisest fool in Christendom"—was the cowardly, drunken, slobbering, homosexual James I. These two interpreted the letter officially as evidence of a "gunpowder plot." In consequence, the cellars under the House of Lords, where Parliament was to

At this house in Lambeth, supposedly, Robert Catesby, Thomas Wintour, and John Wright first discussed the idea of a gunpowder plot.

assemble on November 5, were searched, and at the appropriate moment on November 4, a Yorkshire soldier of fortune, Guy Fawkes, was "discovered" in possession of barrels of gunpowder and duly arrested.

As for Lord Monteagle, his reward for delivering an anonymous letter that he protested he did not understand included a pension of 700 pounds a year for life (worth about 20,000 pounds today). David Jardine, a lawyer who over a century ago realized that the Gunpowder Plot was not what it seemed, wrote that "there was a great deal more to be rewarded in Monteagle's conduct than the mere delivery of the anonymous letter. He became a party to a State intrigue." And, he added, "when such expert artists as Cecil and Bacon framed and propagated a State fiction in order to cover a State intrigue, they took care to cut off or divert the channels of history so effectually as to make it hopeless at the distance of three centuries to trace the truth."

Yet much of the truth has been traced. The whole affair was suspected at the time of being a government frame-up. On December 10, 1605, for instance, an English observer wrote to a correspondent abroad: "Those that have practical experience of the way in which things are done hold it as certain that there has been foul play and that some of the Council secretly spun a web to entangle these poor gentlemen," (the so-called Gunpowder Plotters); the theory that the "plot" was of Cecil's making has now been accepted by many historians.

Above all, events have made it possible for us in the second half of our own century to understand, and therefore assess, the climate of the Gunpowder Plot, which those in the sheltered nineteenth century could not. Today, the use of torture to obtain signatures on convenient statements, the forgery of documents, the unscrupulous use of propaganda, the services of *agents provocateurs*, the sudden

BOTH: BRITISH MUSEUM

The confessed objective of the plotters was to blow up the House of Lords when James I (above and inset) arrived to convene Parliament.

deaths of vital witnesses, the art of the "double-doublecross"—all are part of our day-to-day life and make possible a better understanding of the past.

Political Plot-making

The construction of plots by governments is, of course, a standard device of statesmanship. Although the device neither originated nor ended in the England of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that was a most propitious time for its use. Sir Henry Wotton (who died in 1639) went so far as to admit that plots were necessary to maintain a politician's reputation. The best way, he said, for a government to gain approval for unpopular or even impossible measures was to stir up public indignation against any party opposed to the government. If government spies could suggest an enterprise to a few fanatics, goad them on, and then unmask the affair, so much the better for the government.

Very few statesmen of any country have been more expert in manufacturing such plots than the Cecils, father and son. William Cecil, Lord Burghley, was secretary of state to Queen Elizabeth I from the time of her accession in 1558 until 1572, when he became her chief minister, a position he held until his death in 1598. His son Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, whom he had trained as his successor, continued his policy for the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth's successor, James VI of Scotland and I of England.

The problem facing the Cecils was how to destroy Catholicism in England. In order to justify the increasingly cruel anti-Catholic legislation of Elizabeth's reign, plots to assassinate the queen had to be continually discovered. All the plots were spurious—a fact suspected as long ago as 1901 by the Protestant historian Martin Hume, who wrote:

"The accusations that have been repeated by nearly every historian from Elizabeth's time to our own of widespread and numerous plots to assassinate the Queen are to a large extent unsupported by serious evidence. Pamphlets and broadsides, professing to give the whole story of the various murder-plots, were numerous and have formed the basis of our historical relations for three centuries; but they were written in nearly every instance with political or party aspect and, from the nature of the case, were necessarily based upon an imperfect or partial statement of the facts."

The Cecils had toyed with the idea of a gunpowder plot as early as 1587, and in a modified form they used it in what is known as the Des Trappes Plot. In this case the object of Cecilian policy was to immobilize the French ambassador and counteract his pleas to Elizabeth I on behalf of Mary, Queen of Scots. Two scoundrels were produced, complete with forged documents stating that they had been bribed by the French ambassador to tie a bag of gunpowder under Queen Elizabeth's bed. The whole thing was not only a complete fabrication, but was admitted to be so when, after the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, the English government apologized to the French ambassador and invited him to treat the matter as a joke.

To get rid of Mary, Queen of Scots, the much more elaborate Babington Plot was concocted, in which more careful forgery and more experienced *agents provocateurs* were necessary. (She was executed after the plot had been "discovered.") But the

MAN IN THE NEWS

Guy Fawkes

Guy (sometimes Guido) Fawkes was born in 1570 in Yorkshire. Baptized as an Anglican, he became a Catholic about 1591. In 1593 he enlisted in the Spanish army in Flanders, where he gained a reputation for courage and determination. In 1604 Thomas Wintour persuaded him to return to England. Since Fawkes was unknown in London, and had experience in siege warfare, the leading role in the Gunpowder Plot was entrusted to him.

This vault directly beneath the Old House of Lords, previously used as a coal cellar, was rented by the conspirators on March 26, 1605.

idea of gunpowder was kept in reserve and was finally used, with Cecil's brilliant psychological acumen, on Mary's son, James I.

James's father, Darnley, had been killed as a result of the gunpowder plot of Kirk o' Field, and James himself was terrified by physical violence. An apparent attempt by Catholics to get rid of him in the same way as Darnley would, it was calculated, drive him to the edge of unreasoning fury. No vengeance would seem excessive; no anti-Catholic legislation too severe. There is more than temperamental sadism in James's instructions for torturing Guy Fawkes: "The gentler tortours are to be first usid unto him, *et sic per gradus ad ima tenditur*; and so God speed your good work."

Robert Cecil's technique in the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 was, through the agency of Lord Monteagle, to foster in the minds of a body of desperate men the idea of striking a blow for the Catholic cause, a blow so disruptive of the government that it would be possible for the Catholics to set up a new regime with James I's daughter, Elizabeth, on the throne.

Most of the conspirators were connected by blood or marriage. Robert Catesby, the leader, Francis Tresham, a financial subscriber to the scheme, and Lord Monteagle were all the first cousins of the Wintour (or Winter) brothers, Robert and Thomas, the latter the brains behind the plot. John Grant was the Wintours' brother-in-law; Robert Keyes and Ambrose Rookwood, who owned the best stable in England, were connected with the Wintours' maternal branch. John and Christopher Wright were related to the Wintours through their mother, who had been imprisoned for her Catholicism for fourteen years; and Thomas Percy, the oldest and most eminent of the conspirators, was married to the Wrights' sister.

Only Guy Fawkes, who had been at school with the Wrights; Thomas Bates, Catesby's servant; and Sir Everard Digby, a wealthy young man devoted to Catesby and brought into the plot at the last moment for financial reasons, were outside the "family." Yet, when the matter was discovered, they were interpreted as being "the whole body of Catholics" in England and were said (in the teeth of every particle of evidence) to have been inspired by the Jesuits, who, in fact, had gone to every conceivable length to prevent the plot as soon as they heard of it.

When the plot was discovered, Robert Cecil announced: "It has pleased Almighty God, out of His singular goodness, to bring to light the most cruel and detestable Conspiracy against the person of His Majesty and the whole State of the Realm that ever was conceived by the heart of man at any time or in any place wheresoever." He issued an official account of the matter that has been the basis of all school histories and popular accounts of the Gunpowder Plot ever since. This official account, as epitomized by its greatest defender, the Victorian historian S. R. Gardiner, runs as follows:

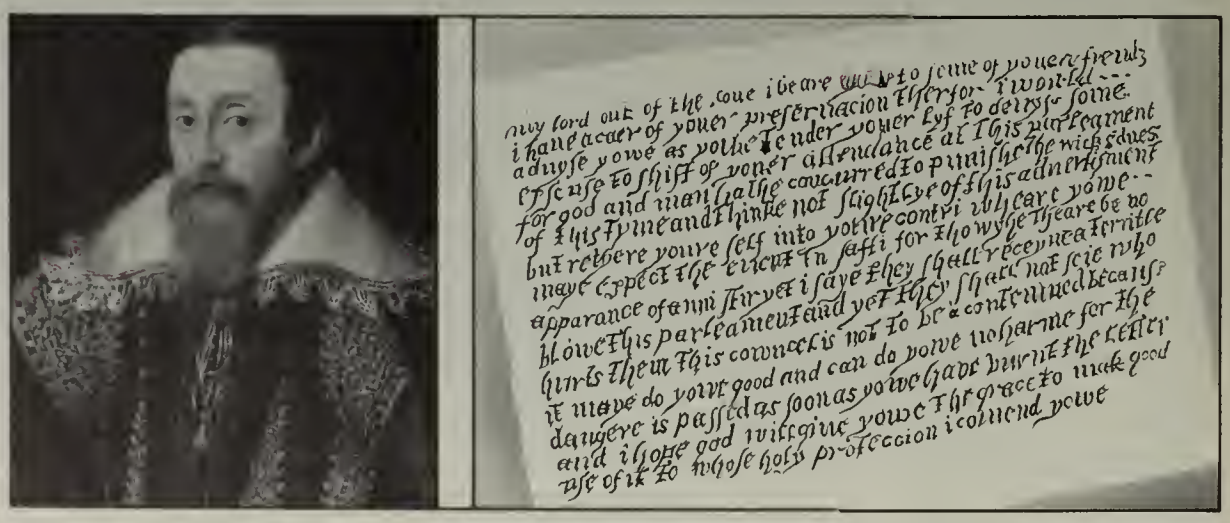
The Official Account

In February, 1604, King James banished all Catholic priests from England. Immediately, a Catholic named Robert Catesby proposed to a few of his friends a plot to blow up king, Lords, and Commons at the opening of Parliament. The king had two sons, Henry and Charles, and a young daughter, Elizabeth. Catesby, expecting that the two princes would be destroyed with their father, intended to make Elizabeth queen and to ensure that she was brought up as a Roman Catholic. Guy Fawkes, a levelheaded soldier, was summoned from Flanders to manage the scheme.

The plotters took a house next to Parliament and began to dig through the wall so they could carry gunpowder into the basement of the House of Lords. The wall, however, was nine feet thick, and they made little progress. In the spring of 1605 James increased their anger by reimposing fines on the Catholic laity. Soon afterward their task was made easier by the discovery that a coal cellar reaching under the floor of the House of Lords was available. One of their number, Percy, rented the cellar and introduced into it barrels of powder, covering them with coal and billets of wood.

Parliament's session was to begin on November 5, and during the preceding evening Fawkes went to the cellar with a lantern, ready to fire the train of powder in the morning. One of the plotters, however, had betrayed the secret. Fawkes was seized, and his companions were pursued. All the conspirators taken alive were executed, and the persecution of the Catholics became even more vicious than ever.

This is probably a fair account of certain simple facts. The plotters did behave in this way and these things did happen. But it is the omissions that



William Parker, fourth Baron Monteagle (above in a portrait by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger) received a letter warning of the Gunpowder Plot on October 26, 1605. A facsimile of that letter appears at right.

are more important, for they suggest that the brain behind the plot was Cecil, and that Monteagle was his tool.

Unanswered Questions

Why, for instance, was the opening of Parliament postponed twice, first from February 7 until October 3, and then from October 3 until November 5? How did the conspirators get the gunpowder, which was a government monopoly? The records for the relevant period are missing, and Cecil subsequently refused to continue an investigation into the leakage of gunpowder from the Tower beyond the beginning of 1604. How did the conspirators manage to rent the cellar, which was owned by a government official who conveniently died—apparently of a heart attack—on the morning of November 5?

Why, when some of the conspirators were being rounded up in the Midlands on November 8, were Catesby and Percy shot? Percy had firsthand knowledge of the king's promise of toleration to Catholics, and Catesby alone knew the full story of the plot. Officially, Cecil protested that he had wanted them taken alive. This could quite easily have been done, since there were only a dozen unarmed plotters against several hundred armed soldiers. The man who shot them was given a liberal pension (two shillings a day for life), which lends color to a contemporary's remark that "some will not stick to report that the statesman, sending to apprehend these traitors, gave special charge and direction for Percy and Catesby: 'Let me never see them alive.' "

Of the arrest of Guy Fawkes, Cecil gave three contradictory official accounts. Some people were told he was arrested in the street, some in the cellar, and some in his room. There are considerable discrepancies even between Fawkes's confession elicited under torture and the official edition. The true facts are unknown.

One circumstance alone is sufficient to destroy the authenticity of the official story. It was the essence of the government's case that it did not know the names of any of the conspirators except Percy, who had rented the cellar, and Fawkes, who was in charge of it, until after Fawkes's confessions under torture on Saturday, November 8. Yet early on the morning of Tuesday, November 5, the servant of a hatter named Hewett, the landlady of two of the minor conspirators, Rookwood and Keyes, Rookwood's servant, and other obscure people who had no obvious connection with the plot were arrested and brought, not before an ordinary magistrate, but before the Lord Chief Justice himself.

It would seem that the government, far from being in the dark about the Gunpowder Plot until the famous anonymous letter to Monteagle appeared, had probably been aware of the plan for eighteen months, and that "the little comedy at Hoxton," when the mysterious letter was delivered, was merely a piece of stage management designed to lead to the public discovery.

We cannot produce absolute proof that Monteagle was involved. But if we accept the hypothesis that the plot was a government frame-up, then the government would have needed a stool pigeon, and Monteagle was the obvious choice. When we look more closely at Monteagle's circumstances and his relationship with the government before and after the plot, his complicity seems even more likely a possibility.

Monteagle's Complicity

By birth and wealth, Monteagle held a special position among the great Catholic families of England. Until the death of Queen Elizabeth I, Monteagle was at one with his coreligionists, but after James's accession he decided to conform and wrote to the king:

"I protest to Your Majesty before Almighty God, I have simply and only propounded to

Guy Fawkes is seized by government agents after being discovered in possession of barrels of gunpowder in a vault of the House of Lords.

myself the true service of God and salvation of my own soul; not gain, not honour, not that which I do most highly value, Your Majesty's favour or better opinion of me, holding it contentment enough to myself that God had in mercy enlightened my mind to see His sacred truth, with desire to serve. . . ."

What Monteagle desired to serve must remain a secret, for the letter is here mutilated, but by March of the following year, 1604 (about the time the gunpowder idea was first discussed), he had managed to have his title, which came to him from his mother, confirmed and had secured the return of certain lands. By the beginning of 1605 Cecil was supporting him in a lawsuit against the earl of Hertford, and by September of that year (a few weeks before the delivery of the letter) King James personally asked the king of France to release Monteagle's brother from a Calais prison—a request the French king granted only with extreme reluctance.

In the light of his favor with the king and intimacy with Cecil, Monteagle's other known activities during the same period are of some interest. During 1605 he was in close touch with his cousins who were then planning the conspiracy. Thomas Wintour accompanied him on visits to Bath, Lancashire, and the country houses of the Catholic gentry. With Tresham and Catesby, he visited the Jesuit Provincial, Father Garnet, whom he asked to procure for him a colonelcy in the troop of English Catholics serving in Flanders, "but would not have it known yet." In July, 1605, Father Garnet asked him and Catesby whether they thought the Catholics in England "were able to make their part good by arms against the King," and to that question Lord Monteagle replied thus: "If ever they were, they are able now. The King is so odious to all sorts."

At the end of October, Monteagle went to Richmond to see the prince of Wales, ostensibly to discover whether he intended to be present at the opening of Parliament on November 5. He then told Wintour that "the Prince was thought not to be there"—a piece of information that caused Catesby to change his plans. That was on Friday. It was on Saturday that Monteagle received the anonymous letter.

Once the plot was discovered, Monteagle was rewarded with silence as well as with money. His name was safeguarded, and where it appeared in the exami-

nations of the prisoners, it was passed over or erased, even when it referred to events in which Monteagle had taken part but which had no reference to the plot. The official copy of the document referring to Monteagle's visit to the prince of Wales was altered to omit that particular episode. The document that narrated the conversation with Father Garnet was suppressed altogether. Before the trial of the conspirators, Cecil wrote in his own hand a private note to the Lord Chief Justice: "You must not omit, you must deliver, in commendation of my Lord Monteagle, words to show how sincerely he dealt and how fortunately it proved that he was the instrument of so great a blessing as this was."

The Religious Question

The plot may have already existed in the minds of the conspirators and was encouraged by Monteagle with Cecil's connivance. Or it may have been put there by Monteagle on Cecil's instigation. But why did this dedicated band of Catholics lend themselves to a murder scheme condemned by their religion and that their priests did their utmost to stop? The answer is to be found in the condition to which Catholicism in England had been reduced.

Some twenty years earlier, in 1581, William Cecil had made it high treason to endeavor to convert anyone to the Catholic faith. To be present at mass meant a year's imprisonment as well as a fine; and every person over sixteen was fined 20 pounds a month for nonattendance at Anglican services (a penalty soon changed to confiscation by the Crown of two-thirds of the offender's property). To ensure that the regulatory acts worked properly, informers were rewarded.

Despite these new measures, which made every Catholic priest guilty of high treason merely because of his priesthood, a stream of priests continued to come to England from the Continent so that Catholics might still receive the sacraments in secret. Cecil soon realized that unless England were shut off completely from the Continent, Catholicism could not be effectively eradicated.

New measures were therefore enacted. All Jesuit and seminary priests were banished from the country on pain of death; any person who did not inform against the priests incurred a fine and imprisonment "at the Queen's pleasure." Every English subject being educated abroad was to return within six months and take the Oath of Supremacy (i.e., deny his Catholicism) or incur the penalties of high treason; no children were to be sent "beyond the sea" without special license from the government; and spies were sent abroad to supply descriptions of English Catholics who might try to return.

In the Tower of London a chastened Fawkes signs his confession, giving what authorities alleged were complete details of the plot. Inset at right shows Fawkes's signature before and after his torture.

What this legislation meant to the ordinary Catholic gentleman may be gathered from the following account by a Protestant historian, Augustus Jessopp, written in 1878 (before the discovery of much new material that confirms it):

"The truth is, a detestable system had now begun to spring up under which no one with any conscience or religious scruples could hold himself safe for an hour. An army of spies and common informers were prowling about the length and breadth of the land, living by their wits, and feeding partly upon the terrors of others and partly upon the letter of the law as laid down by the recent Acts —wretches who had everything to gain by straining the penalties to the utmost, for they claimed their share of the spoil. Armed with warrants from weak magistrates, who were themselves afraid of suspicion, or, failing these, armed with an order from the Privy Council, which was only too easily obtained, they were nothing better than bandits protected by the law, let loose upon that portion of the community which might be harried and robbed with impunity. In some cases the pursuivants, after arresting their victims and appropriating their money, were content to let them alone; in others, they kept them till a ransom might come from friends; in any case, there was always the fun of half-scuttling a big house and living at free quarters during the search, and the chance of securing a handsome bribe in consideration of being left unmolested. . . ."

It was against these intolerable conditions that Catesby and his cousins and friends were determined to protest—by blowing up Parliament with gunpowder at the beginning of the session. When the idea was mooted—presumably by Monteagle—Catesby said: "In that place they have done us all the mischief and perchance God hath designed that place for their punishment!" Thomas Wintour pointed out that if the design failed, as it probably would, the attempt would bring such scandal on Catholicism that not only their enemies but their friends would justifiably condemn them. To which Catesby replied: "The nature of the disease requires so sharp a remedy."

Who Wrote the Letter?

The question as to who wrote the famous anonymous letter to Monteagle is one of those problems that has fascinated succeeding generations. A variety of suggestions have been put forward, but they all have one common weakness: they assume that the plot was genuine and that the letter came from one of the conspirators who was anxious that Monteagle should not take his place in the House of Lords on the fatal morning of November 5.

Even if this were true, it would have been a strange way to send the warning. Several other Catholic peers had, in fact, been warned. Digby had warned some of his friends, and Catesby had persuaded three peers to absent themselves. Had a mere warning been intended, the melodramatic method at Hoxton (even supposing the writer knew that Monteagle's house there had been opened just for the evening) would hardly have been suitable. But, since the point of the communication was not a private word to Monteagle but a public excuse for Cecil to move openly, the would-be detective must obviously start from the hypothesis that the writer was either one of the government agents employed on such matters or a trusted servant of Monteagle himself.

In *The Gunpowder Plot*, pub-

MANSELL COLLECTION

After trial and conviction by a jury of lords commissioners, the last four of the captured conspirators—including Guy Fawkes—are publicly executed on January 31, 1606, in the Old Palace Yard at Westminster.

lished in 1952, I said that it was unlikely that we would ever find out who had written the letter. But with the publication in 1969 of *Guy Fawkes: The Real Story of the Gunpowder Plot*, by Francis Edwards, S.J., the writer of the letter has been more or less discovered. It was, of course, none other than Robert Cecil himself.

Father Edwards suddenly noticed a superficial resemblance between the secretary's handwriting and that of the anonymous letter-writer. The deliberate disguising of the script made certainty difficult, so Father Edwards consulted a leading authority on handwriting, who was accustomed to giving expert evidence in forgery cases. The verdict, based on a microscopic examination, was that Robert Cecil could, without any doubt, have written it and that there is a 70 per cent probability that he did. What made it less than certain was the aging of the ink and paper, but in the expert's mind there was no reasonable doubt that Cecil was the writer.

At the time, however, the most important question was the letter itself. Cecil knew the weak point of the plot was that many people would doubt the existence of the letter, and he was determined to convince the world that there really had been a letter—the one and only way he could have known of the plot. It was therefore exhibited to the world with relentless persistence. It was printed in the *King's Book* (the official government account of the plot) and in every other account of the affair. Transcribed copies were sent to the ambassadors at foreign courts and to other public personages.

After the letter had been returned from Monteagle, Cecil's actions became even more obscure. There are at least three official accounts written by Cecil, which cannot by any possibility all be true. On every single point they are utterly and hopelessly at variance. As one historian of the plot, John Gerard, has put it:

"We are told that King James was the first to understand and interpret the letter which had baffled the sagacity of his Privy Council; that the Lords of the Council had fully interpreted it several days before the King saw it; that the said Lords would not credit the King's interpretation; that the King would not believe their interpretation; and that neither the one nor the other ever interpreted it at all, that His Majesty insisted on a search being made in spite of the reluctance of his Ministers; that they insisted on the search in spite of the reluctance of their royal master; and that no such search was ever proposed by either; that [Sir Thomas] Knyvet was dispatched expressly to look for gunpowder, with instructions to rummage the firewood to the bottom, leaving no cover in which a barrel might lie hid; and that, having no instructions to do anything of the kind, nor any reason to suspect the existence of any barrels, he discovered them only as a piece of luck, so clearly fortuitous as to be clearly providential. On this last point especially the contradictions are," he concludes, "absolutely irreconcilable."

Arrest, Trial, Death

Nothing, indeed, is certain, except that somehow, somewhere, Guy Fawkes was arrested, either late in the evening of November 4 or early in the morning of November 5, brought before Cecil, and eventually tortured into a confession that, together with a forged confession from Thomas Wintour —captured later—forms the sole basis of the government's account of the famous plot in which no one was harmed except the conspirators.

The trials of the eight surviving conspirators—the two Wintours and Grant; Fawkes, Keyes, and Bates; Rookwood and Digby—took place at the end of January, 1606. There was no doubt about the result. On the last days of the month they were executed in two batches, all under the penalty of high treason. They were hanged for a short time, cut down, and castrated while still alive; their hearts were plucked out, their entrails burned before their faces, their dead bodies quartered.

Digby was cut down immediately so he might suffer more. Francis Bacon, present at the executions, said that Digby was still alive when his heart was plucked out, and at the executioner's cry of "Behold the heart of a traitor," he said, "Thou liest!"

Digby was the first to die, Fawkes was the last. Though Fawkes was so weak with torture that he could hardly climb the ladder, even with the hangman's help, he insisted on climbing as high as he could. It was the last instinct of his soldier's training and it cheated the mob of their pleasure. His neck was broken in the fall.

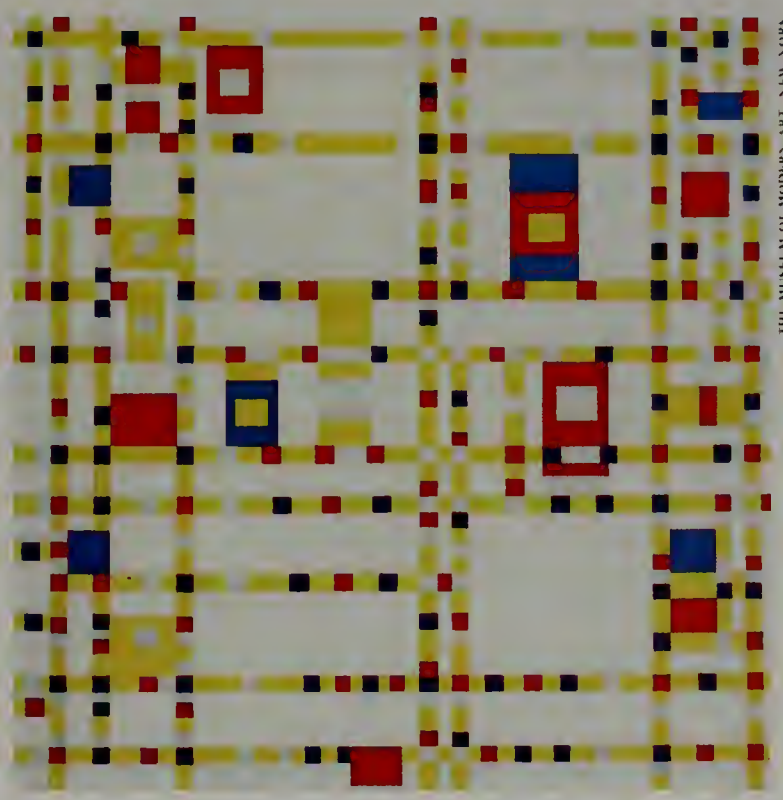
NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON

The real instigator of the Gunpowder Plot escaped punishment. He was, according to our author, Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury.

Hugh Ross Williamson's book Historical Enigmas, *from which this article was excerpted, will be published in January, 1975, by St. Martin's Press, New York.*

MONDRIAN

Withdrawn, anxious, and fastidious to the point of obsession, Piet Mondrian painted cool geometric abstractions, for intensely personal reasons



His arm held firmly at a right angle to his body, Mondrian was photographed in 1942 at his New York studio, opposite. At the time, he was working on the lively Broadway Boogie-Woogie, *above.*

Piet Mondrian was a solitary seeker, but he was alone in good company. Significant tributaries to the current of his work rose from the artistic community, where painters value the judgment, invite the approbation, and borrow the techniques of congenial fellow painters. Mondrian was prepared to recognize the fraternal dimension of his artistic achievement; he generously acknowledged his indebtedness and earnestly shared his aesthetic theories. He even helped to found a polemic journal, *De Stijl*, to disseminate the doctrine of "neoplasticism," the term he coined for his own form of abstract art.

"I knew little of the modern art movement," he wrote late in life. "When I first saw the work of the impressionists, Van Gogh, Van Dongen, and the fauves, I admired it. But I had to seek the true way alone." He was unalterably diffident, forever dissatisfied with the stage he had reached; but at the end he was also wholly certain that he had found his personal signature. That is why, in his rare autobiographical moments, he would stress his creative solitude at the expense of the comforting companionship he had known and valued. As he himself put it, "I had to seek the true way alone."

It is too easy to dismiss such a claim as myth-making. It was, but Mondrian's private myth, like many such myths, contains a good measure of truth: a great artist's style is always bound to contain a powerful infusion of individual talent. Yet, even for the loneliest of artists, private history can never be complete history. The other dimensions of his life have their psychological aspect and leave a psychological deposit. However much the artist himself may undervalue them, however deeply he represses them, what psychologists call the "significant others" are always there, and they are always significant.

It was only natural that the leap into abstraction should have been a collective enterprise. In the early days of cubism there were times when the painters themselves found it hard to tell a Braque from a Picasso; in the founding months of neoplasticism, a painting by Theo van Doesburg, a co-founder of *De Stijl*, was interchangeable with one by Mondrian. These painters were pioneers crossing the frontier in a select caravan. They tossed aside all the benefits of recognizable iconography and instead presented an art demanding to be experienced, and judged, by reference to itself alone. With this demand, abstract art revolutionized man's aesthetic perception, more dramatically, perhaps, than the triumphant discovery of perspective in the early Renaissance.

Mondrian was the most reluctant of revolutionaries: the deliberate, hesitant pace of his artistic career is a measure of the difficulty and the daring of the move

By PETER GAY

Mondrian began his career at the turn of the century as a skillful but undistinguished naturalist painter. Working in the country or in his Amsterdam studio, where he sits in the 1905 photograph at left, he produced picturesque landscapes and drawings, such as the Study for a Windmill *above. To support himself, he occasionally made scientific illustrations for textbooks; a botanical project of 1905 inspired him to do his own series of flower drawings, which, like* Chrysanthemum *above, are of single blossoms, beautifully formed and beginning to fade.*

to abstraction. It was not until 1911, when he was nearly forty, that Mondrian went to Paris and was, he recalled, "immediately drawn to the cubists, especially to Picasso and Léger." But "gradually," he adds, "I became aware that cubism did not accept the logical consequences of its own discoveries; it was not developing abstraction toward its ultimate goal, the expression of pure reality." In 1912 Mondrian undertook his first really drastic deformations of nature—his earlier experiments, paintings of trees or sand dunes, dating only a year or two before, retain sufficient verisimilitude to permit easy identification of their subject matter. It was not until 1915 that his paintings of the ocean lost all but the remotest connection with nature. And it was not until 1917, when he was forty-five, that he took the last step and began to compose canvases consisting entirely of rectangles. The grids that won immortality for him are the work of an even older man: they date from 1920.

Had Mondrian stopped painting in 1911, before he went to Paris, he would have secured an approving, if modest, paragraph in the history of modern art as a gifted painter of landscapes and flowers. His art would have been enjoyed for its subtle color and its refined draftsmanship, and for a certain confidence of attack. But Mondrian's place would have remained modest because his canvases, however pleasing, were derivative. Like most other painters, Mondrian for many years painted like other painters.

From his earliest years there was little doubt—at least in his own mind—that he would become an artist. "Born in Holland 1872, at Amersfoort," so begins a draft of an autobiographical statement written in Mondrian's uncertain English, "I early did painting, conducted by my father (amateur) and my uncle (painter) and became dimpolas for school and high-school drawing teaching." These laconic phrases suppress a serious domestic conflict. Mondrian's father, a talented draftsman, was a schoolteacher who put his artistic gifts to use in the classroom, drawing biblical scenes on the blackboard for the edification of his pupils. He wanted his son to be a schoolteacher too, but Mondrian secured two diplomas, one in 1889, the other in 1892, that entitled him to teach drawing in elementary and in secondary schools. He would teach, but he would teach art.

The compromise between art and education soon proved unworkable, but his academic training would later provide Mondrian with some unexpected gratification: his friend and biographer, Michel Seuphor, recalls seeing the two Dutch diplomas, "yellow with age and carefully folded," in New York; Mondrian had preserved them "to prove that he also knew how to draw academically."

His early landscapes and drawings of flowers amply demonstrate his technical competence in line and color. They also demonstrate his dependence on other painters. For years Mondrian was little more than a satellite, though a brilliant one. He made choices among available styles, from the beginning rejecting what he considered the sentiment of romanticism:

> I prefered to paint landscaps, houses, etc. by gray dampy weather or by very strong sunlight when the atmosphere by its dencity the particularitys of things and the great lines accentue them selves. I sketched by moonlight—cows lying down or staying immovable on Dutch's flat meadows, & . . . houses with their dead windows then. But not as romantist: I saw with realist eyes.

But he did not as yet see the world wholly with his own eyes; his canvases bear the imprint of the realist school

BOTH: HAAGS GEMEENTEMUSEUM, THE HAGUE

In 1908, when he drew the grim self-portrait above, Mondrian had begun to experiment with a freer, more impressionistic style. His Trees of the Gein, with Rising Moon, *right, painted about 1908, attempts to capture the strange effects of moonlight on the landscape.*

centered in The Hague, and, later, of the Amsterdam impressionists, notably George Hendrik Breitner. Even when he began to adopt pure colors and lay on his paint in broad, flat strokes, he took his inspiration from the fauves and late neoimpressionists. Between 1912 and 1917, the five years he was liberating himself from nature, Mondrian discarded his old masters and appealed to new ones, using their art more and more to clarify his own thinking. He was searching for purity, and for universal principles of beauty, and in this search he began to confront fellow painters as an equal. In retrospect, we recognize the steady, if glacial, movement of his art in a single direction: toward simplification. But it would be a long time before he would find his own simplicity.

In 1914, after he returned to the Netherlands from Paris, he came to know Bart van der Leck and Theo van Doesburg, two artists who were battling their own way into abstraction and whose energetic, self-confident manifestoes greatly impressed him. Full of vitality, full of zeal for abstract art, sincerely appreciating Mondrian's work, Van Doesburg asked him to collaborate on a review he intended to publish and which he wanted to call *Stijl*. "I was happy to be able to publish my ideas about art that I was then in process of committing to paper," and happy to work with congenial artists.

The early issues of *De Stijl*, published in 1917 and 1918, introduced neoplasticism as a movement to simplify the formal components of art. But Mondrian made it plain that the program for modern art was also a program for modern man. The style he had so slowly evolved was more than a style: it was a diagnosis, a manifesto, perhaps a cure. "The artist," he wrote in one of those first issues, "is simply the more or less appropriate *instrument* through which a culture . . . expresses itself aesthetically." All mature persons form "part of the spirit of the age," and all in some measure "represent it." But the modern artist—and Mondrian meant, of course, himself and his associates—represents it most completely. The first, most important, quality of neoplasticism, Mondrian wrote, is "reasonableness"—*redelijkheid.* Modern man asks, above all, for "reasonableness," and that is why neoplasticism, wholly rational, is supremely "an art for this time." It is so even more because, in addition to being rational, it is abstract, a quality that twentieth-century culture finds increasingly congenial: "The life of cultivated modern man," Mondrian wrote, "is gradually turning away from the natural: it is growing more and more to be an *abstract* life."

And he persisted in his claims for art. "What a beautiful task lies in prospect before art: to prepare the future," he exclaimed in 1931. "Art must move not only parallel with human progress but must advance ahead of it. It is the task of art to express a clear vision of reality." In this exalted self-appraisal, the artist appears as a liberator, a worthy companion to the physicist and the philosopher. Together they will free mankind from subjectivity, from confusion, from the oppression of time.

Such pretensions, and such prose, cry out for criticism. They beg all the questions they purport to settle, offend the very lucidity they promise to provide; they are as abstract and opaque as the art they celebrate.

Yet there are passages when Mondrian lapses into concrete reality. He is far from hostile to science and technology. For Mondrian the city, especially the metropolitan capital, constitutes the vital center for the new, rational, abstract society that he wants "plastic art"

to help bring into being. The city corrects the essential disorderliness of raw nature: "The truly modern artist," he wrote in that first volume of *De Stijl*, "sees the metropolis as the supreme form of abstract life; it stands closer to him than nature," and is more likely to give him a sense of beauty. "In the metropolis, nature has already been set right, reduced to order by the human spirit." *Broadway Boogie-Woogie*, the last painting Mondrian completed, is an exuberant tribute to New York; and his writing, his conversation, and the titles of some of his paintings, are touching tributes to Paris and London.

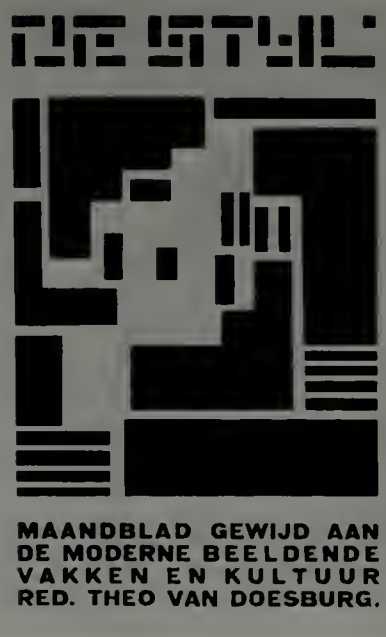
Art, then, for Mondrian, was a cultural product and a cultural weapon, a privileged instrument for the construction of an urban and, in the best sense of the word, artificial order. Yet Mondrian's perception of his world, no matter how persistent his call for reality, suffers from a curious remoteness. One begins to wonder: if Mondrian is in tune with the world, which world is it that he is in tune with? His much-reiterated realism, it would seem, is in fact a form of mysticism.

Mondrian was indeed a mystic, and his mysticism amounts to more than an irresponsible use of abstract nouns, or the spouting of metaphysical generalities. Much of his life he was committed to theosophy, that fashionable religious doctrine concocted in the late nineteenth century. In 1888 Madame H. P. Blavatsky, the founder of the Theosophical Society, had somberly warned readers of her most famous book, *The*

The natural disarray of the tree's branches in Mondrian's drawing above, from about 1910, contrasts vividly with the stylized skeleton of The Gray Tree *at right, painted in 1912. With new mastery, the artist was assimilating the work of the cubists and moving toward his own form of abstraction.*

BOTH HAAGS GEMEENTEMUSEUM, THE HAGUE

In a triptych titled Evolution *(1911), Mondrian uses three female figures to symbolize a mystical progression toward enlightenment. The figure on the left represents matter; that on the right, the soul; and in the center is the open-eyed, exalted spirit. Mondrian, a theosophist, believed that art, particularly abstract art, was the vehicle to attaining the highest spiritual level. To expound his ideas on abstraction, he collaborated with Theo van Doesberg and other Dutch modernists to found in 1917 the journal* De Stijl, *right.*



Secret Doctrine, that "all is doubt, negation, iconoclasm and brutal indifference, in our age of the hundred isms and no religion. Every idol is broken save the Golden Calf." In what they diagnosed as this desperate plight, Blavatsky and her devoted, if sometimes rebellious, followers—Annie Besant, Edouard Schuré, Rudolf Steiner—sought light from an antique tradition of Western mysticism, from mythical figures like Orpheus and Hermes, and from Eastern mystics whose message provided answers that Western seekers could not find in official Christianity or modern atheism. Theosophy promised to still doubts and dispel melancholy.

Theosophy seems a rather paradoxical choice for those, like Mondrian, who professed themselves to be moderns. Its roots were ancient and its ideas alien, its living Asian gurus faced Western culture with blank incomprehension, and its doctrines offered Western man no remedy other than escape. But human nature thrives on paradoxes: it is simply a fact that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many apostles of modernism in general loathed the modern world. And many of them—Vasily Kandinsky and Franz Marc, Victor Hugo and William Butler Yeats—embraced esoteric doctrines and enacted spiritualistic rituals that were as hostile to contemporary positivism as they were to existing Christian sects. In the Middle Ages, numerology had been the superstition of the learned; now, in the time of Mondrian, theosophy became the superstition of the avant-garde.

Theosophy provided entertainment, reassurance, the excitement normally associated with the uncanny and the occult, and, above all, relief from what struck many sensitive spirits as the unbearable tedium and invincible vulgarity of commercial bourgeois culture. It offered an alternative to materialism. There was a conviction abroad that science, and its ubiquitous companion, technology, had ruthlessly truncated human possibilities, sheering off man's deepest probes and highest flights to make life flat, two-dimensional. Science had succeeded in exposing Christianity as false, even absurd; this had made official religion intellectually as well as emotionally unavailable. But science, while performing this necessary act of destruction, had constructed no satisfying substitute: positivism, the religion of the scientist, was aridity itself, a philosophical desert that offered no shelter from the blazing sun of fact and the icy blast of scientific theory. Science, so the argument went, had given man technical information that few could grasp, creature comforts that only the philistine could enjoy, and a view of the universe vastly indifferent to the happiness, the lot, the very existence of man—a cosmic yawn. In contrast, theosophy restored hope and a sense of mystery, of adventure, of intimacy among the adept.

What made theosophy so peculiarly seductive was that it committed its devotees to nothing decisive. Being itself the most confused of eclectic compilations, theosophy legitimated confusion; it licensed the faithful to hold beliefs that a more demanding theology or more rigorous metaphysics would have exposed as, quite simply, inconsistent. Theosophy had something for everyone, almost as though Madame Blavatsky had put her doctrines together after consulting public opinion polls.

Theosophy was in no way an isolated phenomenon. Like the concurrent streams of aestheticism, symbolism, and romantic Catholicism, theosophy reflected a value-impregnated dualism. It differentiated sharply between two worlds: on the one side, there was busi-

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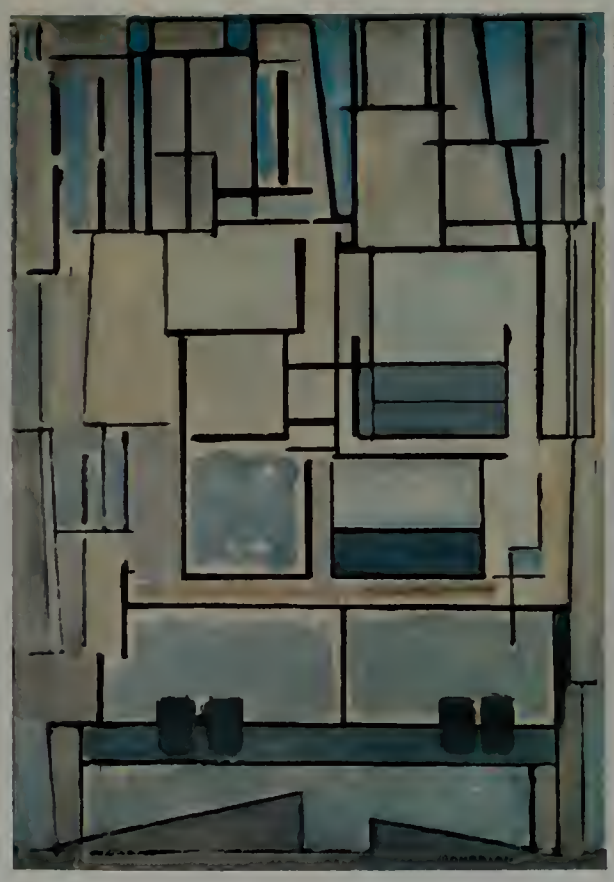


THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK; GIFT OF MR. AND MRS. ARMAND P. BARTOS

Still Life with Ginger Jar I, *above, painted in 1911, is a strong composition made up of easily recognizable elements—the jar, a glass, a knife, and a piece of cheese on a napkin. A year later Mondrian moved to Paris, where he produced* Blue Façade *(1914), right, a cubist version of a wall reduced to flat, geometric planes.*

ness, science, "mundane" styles like realism and impressionism; on the other, the world "behind the mask"—the world of lofty contemplation, of disdainful distance from common pleasure seekers and philistine patrons. And, different—even incompatible—as they were, all these movements offered the same sort of ladder from the vulgar to the purer world: allusion, symbol, legend, mystical correspondences, esoteric rites.

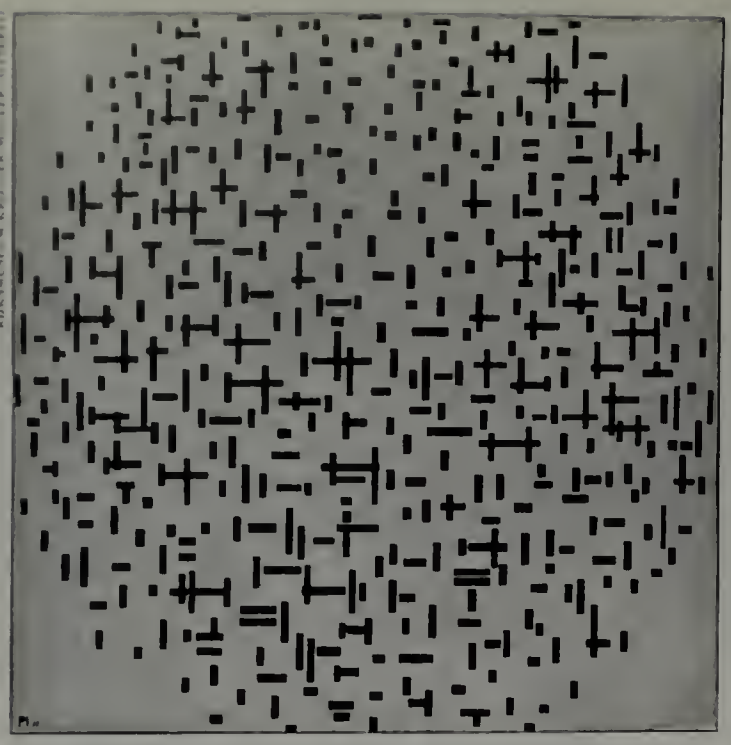
The appeal of such notions to artists is obvious enough: to exalt the spirit is to exalt the artist, its guardian; to make religion into an art is to invite the heady reversal of making art into a religion. "Art," wrote Mondrian in 1917, "—however much it is an end in itself—is, just like religion, a means by which the universal is known." And, "art already can provide a transition to the finer regions, which I call the spiritual realm." Art is "the path of ascension; away from matter."

The strange triptych he painted about 1911, *Evolution,* demonstrates that for Mondrian, at least, philosophy meant theosophy: the magical number three that dominates the work, the aseptic asexuality of the three women, the occult emblems that accompany them, the spiritual progression marked by the opened eyes of the figure in the center, the very theme of illumination and spiritual growth underscored by the theosophical title—all these are unthinkable without the writings of Madame Blavatsky and Rudolf Steiner.

For Steiner, and his fellow prophets, man is threefold: he lives through, in the ascending order of their purity, his body, his soul, and his spirit. His first environment, as Steiner graphically put it, includes "the objects, intelligence of which flows into him through the gates of his senses, which he touches, smells, tastes, hears, and sees." The second, that of the soul, consists of the impressions these objects make on him, his pleasures and pains, his desires and aversions. The third is on a far higher level; here, in the dazzling light of knowledge and insight, where the secrets of body and soul are laid bare, man's godlike essence emerges. "Man," Steiner sums up, "is citizen of three worlds."

At this critical point, Mondrian's statements about art, that it is "the path of ascension; away from matter," raise an inconvenient paradox. If, as he said, he admired the art that is an escape from matter, how could he, at the same time, admire the modern metropolis—the greatest concentration, the very triumph of matter? The matter that Mondrian found hateful, and therefore rejected, was by no means co-extensive with all manifestations of materiality. Rather his anxiety and aversion came to fasten on the organic, the living—on the out-of-doors, and even more on the human body, with its curves, its smells, its unpredictability, its disorderly passions. Observers reported that Mondrian, sitting in cafés with friends, would ask to change places with them so that he would not have to look at trees, or at the moving shapes of passers-by. And he preferred New York to Paris because Paris with its tree-lined boulevards was still "so romantic." New York, it seemed, had happily shed this form of slavery to the senses. Thus, what enabled Mondrian to be a devotee of theosophy and, at the same time, of the metropolis—what made it, in fact, perfectly consistent—was that he experienced both as a concentrated, systematic assault on nature.

Absorbed as he was in his philosophical system, intent as he was on evoking social and metaphysical resonances in his paintings, Mondrian at the same time envisioned his work as pure aes-



"Observing sea, sky and stars, I sought to indicate their plastic function through a multiplicity of crossing verticals and horizontals," Mondrian wrote of his so-called pier and ocean paintings. The Composition in Black and White *at left, painted in 1917, was the culmination of this series. Opposite, an earlier work,* Composition, *is one of Mondrian's continuing experiments with line and color—in this case, variations of pink, blue, and orange. During this period, when he was going beyond cubism and developing a truly unique style, he lived in Holland, returning to Paris in 1919 after World War I was over.*

thetic play. When his friend Charmion von Wiegand protested that the colored squares he had introduced into his *Broadway Boogie-Woogie* violated his theory, Mondrian promptly and disarmingly rejoined: "But it works. You must remember, Charmion, that the paintings come first and the theory comes from the paintings." Those privileged to watch him at work saw him revise his canvases again and again. In his American years, during World War II, he used colored tapes to find his design: as Charmion von Wiegand recalls, he would push the tapes "across the canvas until the intervals and the relations of the planes were 'right.' . . . He did everything by eye." For all the mathematical and rational appearance of his mature work, Mondrian made no calculations and used only the simplest tools—a ruler, strips of paper, and, in his last years, the tapes. "He often repeated," Michel Seuphor reports, "that the rightness of proportions and relations depended on intuition alone."

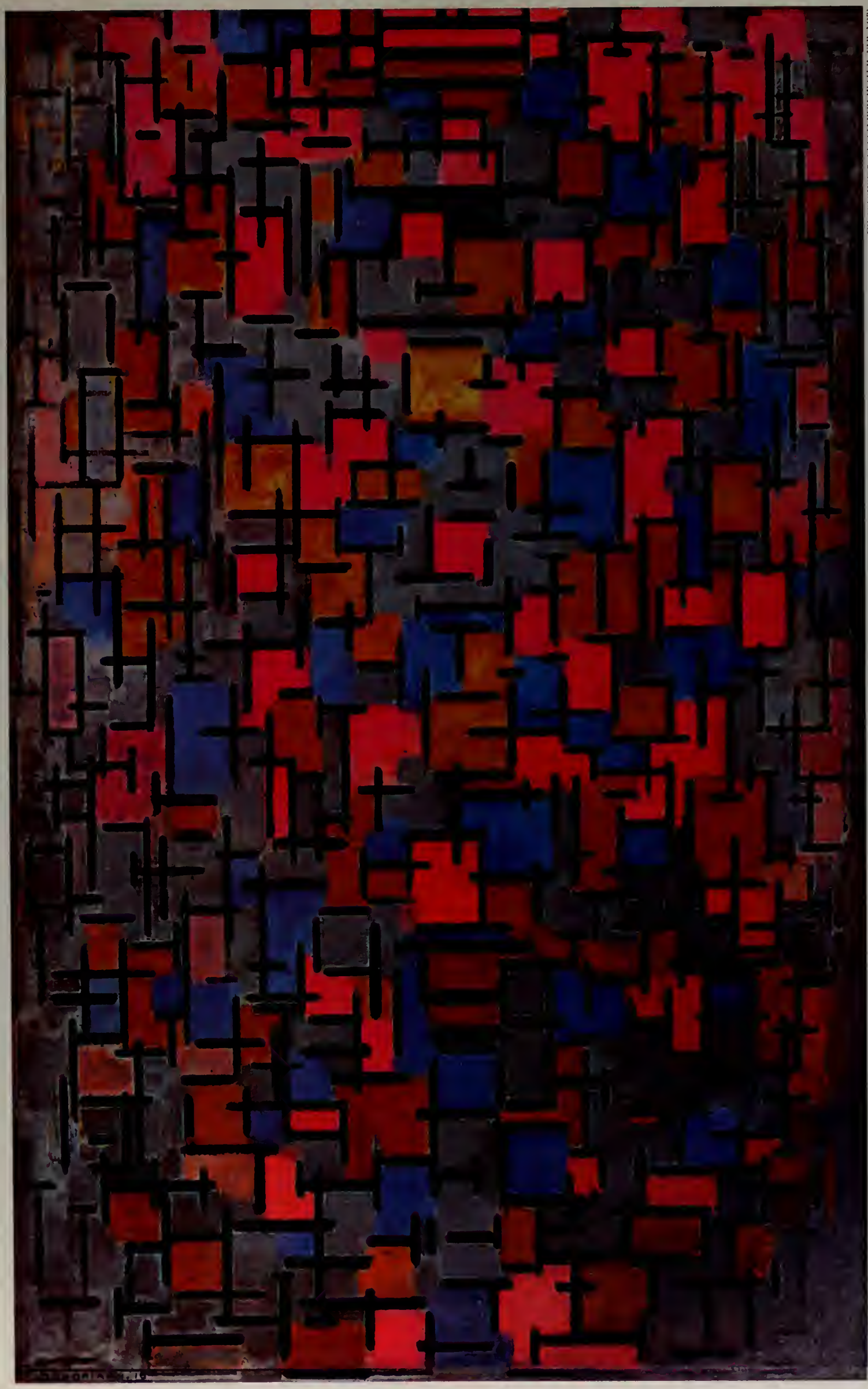
Only the hasty viewer will judge an array of Mondrian's canvases as monotonous. In fact, he exploited the possibilities inherent in his austere, self-imposed vocabulary to the utmost: he used thick lines and thin, playing in the early 1920's with stubby black bands that do not quite reach the edge of his canvas; he used a small palette of primary colors, sometimes in combination, sometimes singly; he varied his designs, sometimes crowding his picture space with repeated parallels like so many prison bars, sometimes emptying it of all but a white ground barely cut by a pair of black bands; he placed a dominant square into the center of his canvas or pushed it off to one side; even the shape of his canvases—perfect squares, near squares, and, rarely, tall rectangles—was open to his restless experimentation. It was in the late 1920's that Mondrian's simplifications reached their logical limit, but the development of his art did not follow a single course; sometimes he would venture into drastically different modes of expression during one year. Whatever the answers to his insistent call for pure plastic art, he found no one of them to be definitive.

Behind Mondrian's serious, thoughtful play with lines and planes, behind his manifest philosophical purposes, there lie the deeply buried springs of his art. It is part of the historian's conventional wisdom that he must respect intentions. This is a useful injunction. But Mondrian's conscious intentions conceal what I would call his unconscious intentions—impulses and purposes inaccessible to his awareness and therefore inaudible, or only faintly audible, in his correspondence, his manifestoes, and his autobiographical statements.

Inarticulate as they are about his intimate, private world, yielding up their secrets with the utmost reluctance, Mondrian's paintings speak of an heroic effort at discipline. They speak of patience and of self-denial. The knife-edge sharpness of the lines, the even tone and texture of the planes, reflect Mondrian's distaste for chance. In his work, deliberation is master, and this deliberation is an indispensable weapon in Mondrian's strategy of concealment. Even the bland neutrality of his customary title, *Composition,* offers as little information to the interpreter as possible; the hints provided by occasional titles, like *Fox Trot A* or *Trafalgar Square,* are rare, curt, and inexplicit.

What we know of the man fits his reticent paintings to perfection. When Charmion von Wiegand met him, she was forcibly struck by his "sharp ascetic features," which she likened to those of "a Catholic priest or a scientist." It is a perceptive assessment; it characterizes a man who has given up much for the sake of utter concentration. As we know, for man, that unruly animal, asceticism is a triumph, often dearly bought, over raging inner turmoil, the firm restraining hand of Plato's charioteer checking his willful, spirited horses of passion.

In Mondrian—to move from Plato to Freud—this restraint manifested itself in deep inhibitions and a marked obses-



THE SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, NEW YORK

During the twenties and thirties Mondrian, a lifelong bachelor, lived alone in a studio on the rue du Départ. The entrance, left, photographed in 1926, was always decorated by a vase with a single artificial flower that he said symbolized "a feminine presence." The studio itself, above, was like a Mondrian painting—neat, precise, the elements perfectly balanced.

siveness. We do not know enough—in any event, I do not know enough—about his fantasies or the details of his daily routine to venture a conclusive diagnosis. But his habits, his philosophy, and his art convincingly reinforce one another; they suggest an overriding fear, the fear of what he called "primitive animal instinct." He was sensitive, remote, self-protective.

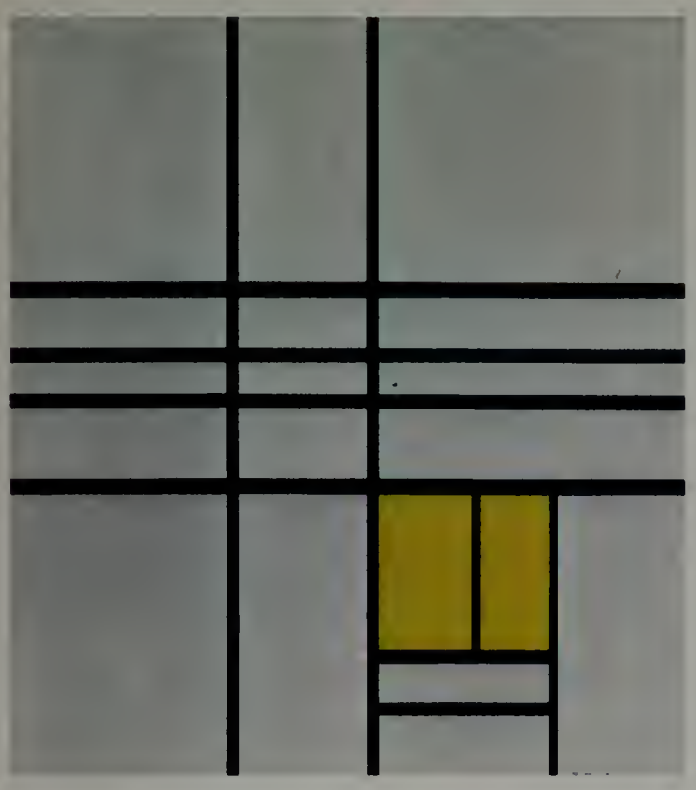
His obsessive rigidity was plain to all who knew him. It manifests itself in perfectionism, a compulsive need to rework his paintings as long as they remained in his studio—the dates assigned to some of them mark periods of six or seven years. It also manifests itself in his notable neatness. "His dress was always scrupulously correct," writes Frank Elgar, "always meticulously neat, even though his garments were threadbare. His demeanour was that of a rather buttoned-up *petit bourgeois*"—the adjective "buttoned-up" carrying a great deal more weight than Elgar seems to suspect. Mondrian was, Elgar concludes, reticent, solitary, retiring, and taciturn.

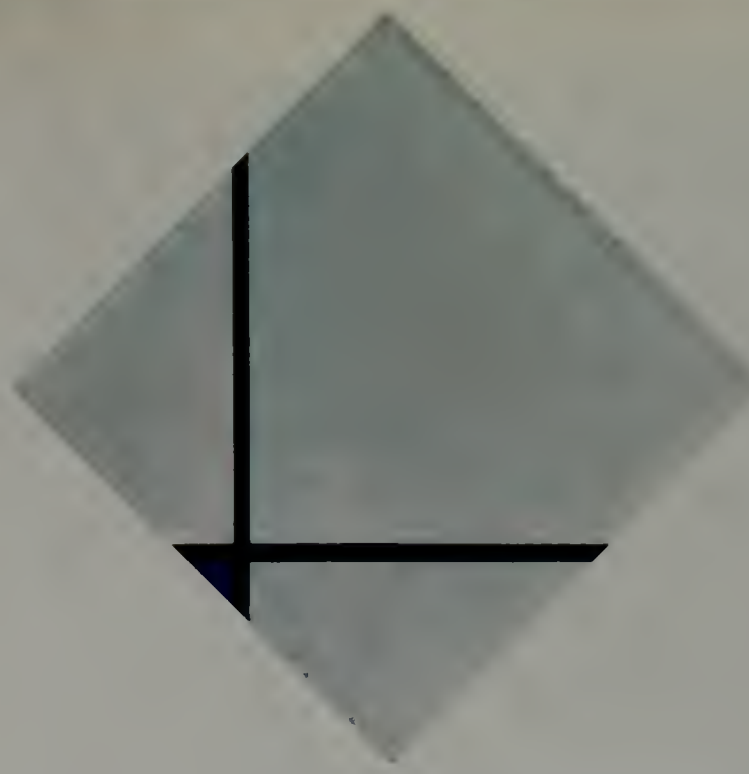
The rooms where he worked confirm his austerity; they were bare, spare, clean, as empty as possible, decorated with rectangles as though Mondrian were living in one of his own paintings. In one poignant photograph of his studio in Paris, taken around 1926, the starkness is relieved by a single tulip in a vase, and that tulip artificial.

"Within the artificial surroundings of his studio," Mondrian's friend Nelly van Doesburg recalled many years later, "the placement of ashtrays, table settings, etc., could not be altered for fear of disturbing the 'equilibrium' of the total decor which he sought." Clearly, Mondrian's equilibrium was precarious, tenuous in the extreme; his ceremonies of neatness, of cleanliness, of persistence, were defenses against dangerous passions bubbling beneath.

I have no wish to ascribe Mondrian's aesthetic thought solely to unconscious sources, but I would insist that those sources existed and significantly shaped his work. That assault on nature, so critical for his religion and for his admiration of the city, re-emerges in his style of life—and in his style of painting. The assault was a counterattack, a way of managing anxieties that would otherwise be intolerable. But, then, what was Mondrian afraid of? We are all afraid, but more desperately than most, the obsessive personality needs to escape fears and deny conflicts with his endless rituals, his compulsive cleanliness, his stubborn refusal to change the most trivial arrangement. There is one curious, immensely instructive clue to Mondrian's fears: his brother Carel reports that Mondrian had "an almost maniacal fear of injuring his eyes"; he would close them "at the slightest danger," or, more dramatically, cover them with his hands. (Indeed, in his early self-portraits, Mondrian's eyes, staring meaningfully and directly, seem sad and vulnerable.) Castration is punishment for illicit desires; and so vivid a fear recalls to mind Charcot's famous exclamation: *"C'est toujours la chose génitale . . . toujours, toujours, toujours."*

In fact, the course of Mondrian's relations with women followed a single significant pattern all his life: he would fall in love, and then, in Nelly van Doesburg's words, "something always seemed to 'happen' which prevented the creation of more lasting bonds." While he seemed to regret the invariable reverses that kept him a lifelong bachelor, Mondrian's overwhelming response to this fate was surely one of relief. When acquaintances would playfully suggest he get married, he would reply, "I am too poor," or, even more transparently, "I am too busy."





By this time, Mondrian's paintings were wholly abstract and were meant to express what he called "dynamic movement in equilibrium." The square tipped on its axis, above, dates from 1926; Composition, *at left, where the color is sparingly applied, was done in 1936.*

LEFT: PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART; THE LOUISE AND WALTER ARENSBERG COLLECTION; RIGHT: PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART; THE A.E. GALLATIN COLLECTION

Mondrian seems to have talked about women incessantly, with the theoretical exuberance of a prurient teen-ager. His very enthusiasm is suspect; it committed him to nothing. "Although he was in his fifties when I knew him in Paris," Nelly van Doesburg writes, "the subject of women was ever on his lips. He would interrupt any type of conversation in order to comment with boyish enthusiasm upon the physical attractiveness of some admired example of the opposite sex. His taste was catholic in this respect, ranging from the refined beauty of a number of female acquaintances to the more direct appeal of pin-up posters. He was completely captivated by the charms of Mae West, who at the time was quite young, but nonetheless used artificial make-up in a way that Mondrian found attractive." There is deep pathos in this account, especially in his fascination with Mae West, that ambiguous sex object whom Parker Tyler, in a perceptive remark, once called a woman impersonating a female impersonator.

Mondrian's manner of social dancing, a form of physical contact with women that he unequivocally enjoyed, reveals the same corrosive ambivalence. He went dancing as often as he could and repeatedly took lessons. Often he chose as his partners the wife or mistress of one of his friends—one means of securing safety. Another means, even more instructive, was his posture, stiff, graceless, distant; in short, desexualized: "He would pick out the prettiest girl," one of his acquaintances reports, "and would dance as stiff as a ramrod, his head in the air, and without saying a word to his partner." (In view of the fame that his exuberant *Broadway Boogie-Woogie* enjoys, it is important to recognize that to Mondrian the meaning of the dance it celebrates strikingly differs from its customary connotations: "True Boogie-Woogie," he told an American friend, J. J. Sweeney, shortly before his death, "I conceive as homogeneous in intention with mine in painting; destruction of melody which is the equivalent of destruction of natural appearance; and construction through the continuous opposition of pure means—dynamic rhythm." And he added, "I think the destructive element is too much neglected in art.")

As with his other feelings, Mondrian clothed his sexual feelings in philosophical garb. He found even the dance to be pregnant with profound meaning, seeing it as part of the great assault on nature that modern culture had undertaken: "The machine," he wrote in *De Stijl*, "is more and more taking the place of natural forces. In fashion we see a characteristic tightening of form and an internalization of color, both of them signs of a withdrawal from nature. In modern dance (two-step, boston, tango, etc.) we see the same tightening up: the round line of the old dances (waltz, etc.) has given way to the straight line, while every movement is immediately neutralized by a countermovement—a sign of the search for equilibrium."

Once again, theosophical doctrine proved helpful: it supplied theoretical justification for feelings about women Mondrian had already experienced on his own. For theosophists, the female principle expresses the low order of the body, while the male principle aspires to the higher realm of the spiritual. Mondrian wrote that it is "the Woman in Man that is the direct cause of the dominance of the tragic in art"—the sentimental, the emotional, the irregular, the curved, all "tragic" qualities that he hoped to overcome with his neoplastic art. In his unceasing search for the equilibrium that would end the reign of the tragic over modern culture, Mondrian found even the diagonal line an in-

tolerable betrayal: when Van Doesburg, after several years of close collaboration with Mondrian, introduced diagonals into his paintings, Mondrian broke with him and withdrew from the *De Stijl* group.

In the late nineteenth century, and in the early twentieth, philosophers and playwrights, sociologists and artists, talked a good deal about the confrontation of the male and female principles; it appears in the novels of Zola, the plays of Shaw, the speculations of Otto Weininger, the theorizing of Freud. Mondrian's contribution to this interminable debate was as imprecise and portentous as all his philosophizing, but the entry he made into a notebook he kept around 1913 achieves a clarity that is quite exceptional: "*Female*: static, preserving, obstructing element," he noted. "*Male*: kinetic, creative, expressive, progressing element." In the same note he contrasted woman, the "matter-element," with man, the "spirit-element," and gave this opposition visual correlatives: "Woman: horizontal line/ Man: vertical line," a pairing that has as its logical consequence "Male artist: spiritual joy/ Female artist: material joy." The famous "plus-and-minus" drawings and paintings he began to do shortly after he wrote this note represent the encounter of the two principles in the simplest, starkest terms.

In a series of articles for *De Stijl* his long, tortuous discussion of "male inwardness" and "female outwardness," of growing purification, of the clarification of opposites and other esoteric matters, is exceedingly obscure. But this much is clear: the female principle stands in Mondrian's scheme for all that is representative and concrete; in art, it embraces the portrayal of nature, including landscape, still life, and interiors as well as the figure. In sharp contrast, the male principle, especially in its purified, neoplastic form, is abstract and universal. Like many other artists of his time—like Beardsley and Munch and Strindberg—Mondrian was convinced that throughout the past the female principle had been more powerful than the male. The rise of neoplasticism, therefore, with its pressure toward determinate, abstract clarity, was nothing less, and nothing more, than a blow in the long battle for male liberation—a blow struck not for the sake of superiority, by any means, but for equality, for what Mondrian envisioned as the ideal of the future: "female-male equilibrium." Politically and socially, this seems a reasonable and decent ideal, but what matters in our search for Mondrian is that it represents an ideal far less than a symptom—the symptom of a man who was afraid.

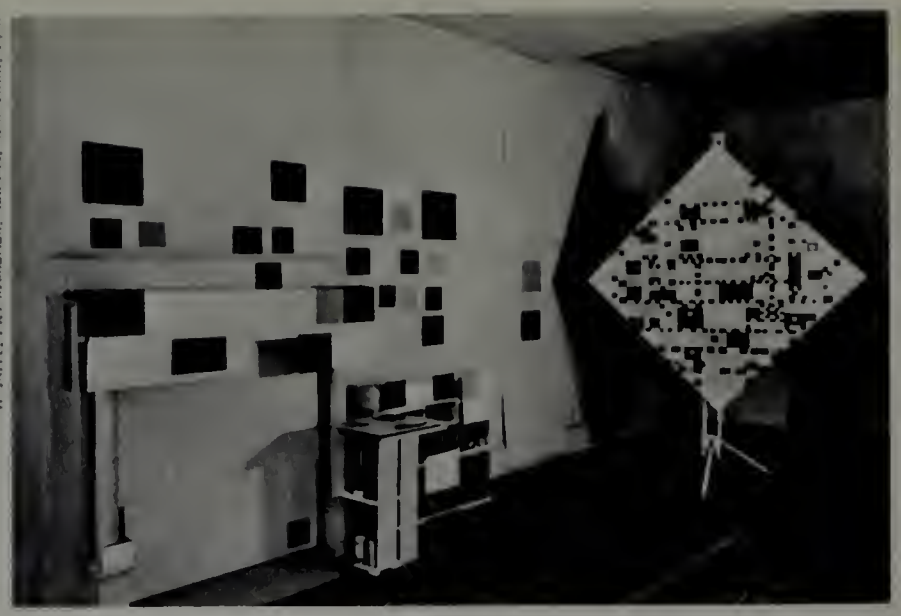
More than any other artist, Mondrian found the maximum of variety in the greatest of simplicity. He painted many variations of the square, crisscrossed by prominent black lines, such as this colorful Composition with Red, Blue and Yellow, *done in 1930.*

In the course of his exposition for *De Stijl*, Mondrian insisted that the confrontation of the male and female principles clearly displayed the "unity of life and art." We are entitled, I think, to take seriously this invitation to unite Mondrian's life to Mondrian's art. Had he been anyone else, he would have been just another fussy bachelor, starting affairs he could not consummate, driven back into himself by his awe of female superiority, staring at the provocative nudes in magazines that cater to such tastes—a bank clerk, perhaps, in reality as he was in appearance. But, fortunately for himself and for art, he was Mondrian, an artist who could transform his neurosis into painting. In 1926, when he heard that the Dutch government had outlawed the Charleston as obscene, Mondrian exploded into an eloquent and revealing protest: "How could they ban that sporting dance! The dancers keep at a certain distance from each other, and spend so much energy in doing the steps that they hardly have time for thoughts of sex." Here, in this exclamation, we have the prototype of Mondrian's psychological strategies: sensuality disarmed by distance, erotic energy translated into aesthetic activity,

an activity so vigorous that one hardly has time for thoughts of sex. As he danced, so he painted. Is there in modern art an instance of sublimation more splendid than this?

To speak of Mondrian's art as a form of sublimation is to say less than would appear at first glance. Sublimation is not the monopoly of the neurotic or of the artist; it is a universal, perfectly reasonable defense mechanism by which an individual diverts sexual energies from forbidden into permissible channels, or gives these energies an altogether new form. It provides gratification for repressed impulses in ways that are privately acceptable and socially useful. There is a piece of sublimation in all adult activity—in the pursuit of politics, in the conduct of business, in the practice of religion, even in explicitly erotic activity. The artist, as Freud noted long ago, is peculiarly well equipped to sublimate; it may be this gift that directs him toward art in the first place. To diagnose sublimation in art is therefore, by itself, scarcely significant. This is true all the more in that the results of sublimation often bear little resemblance to its origins; to identify its work therefore requires some ingenuity.

Certainly, Mondrian's sublimation was highly elaborate. Yet, at the same time, it was peculiarly expressive. It therefore takes a privileged rank among the causes that made his art. Mondrian's aesthetic choices emerged from his unconscious conflicts; as he translated these choices into his paintings, wielding his ruler and applying his brush, these conflicts guided his hand. He found sensuality so frightening that it was his dread of desire, rather than the desires themselves, that ultimately shaped his abstract designs. No sentiment, no curves, no touching—that is how he lived and that is what his paintings proclaim. He, like his art, was full of emotions: the equilibrium for which he groped with such patience, such inventiveness, and such needy anxiety, was anything but static. It was, as he himself insisted, dynamic, even if that dynamism had origins of which he was unaware. His paintings offer impressive evidence of just how much beauty the talented can wrest from fear.



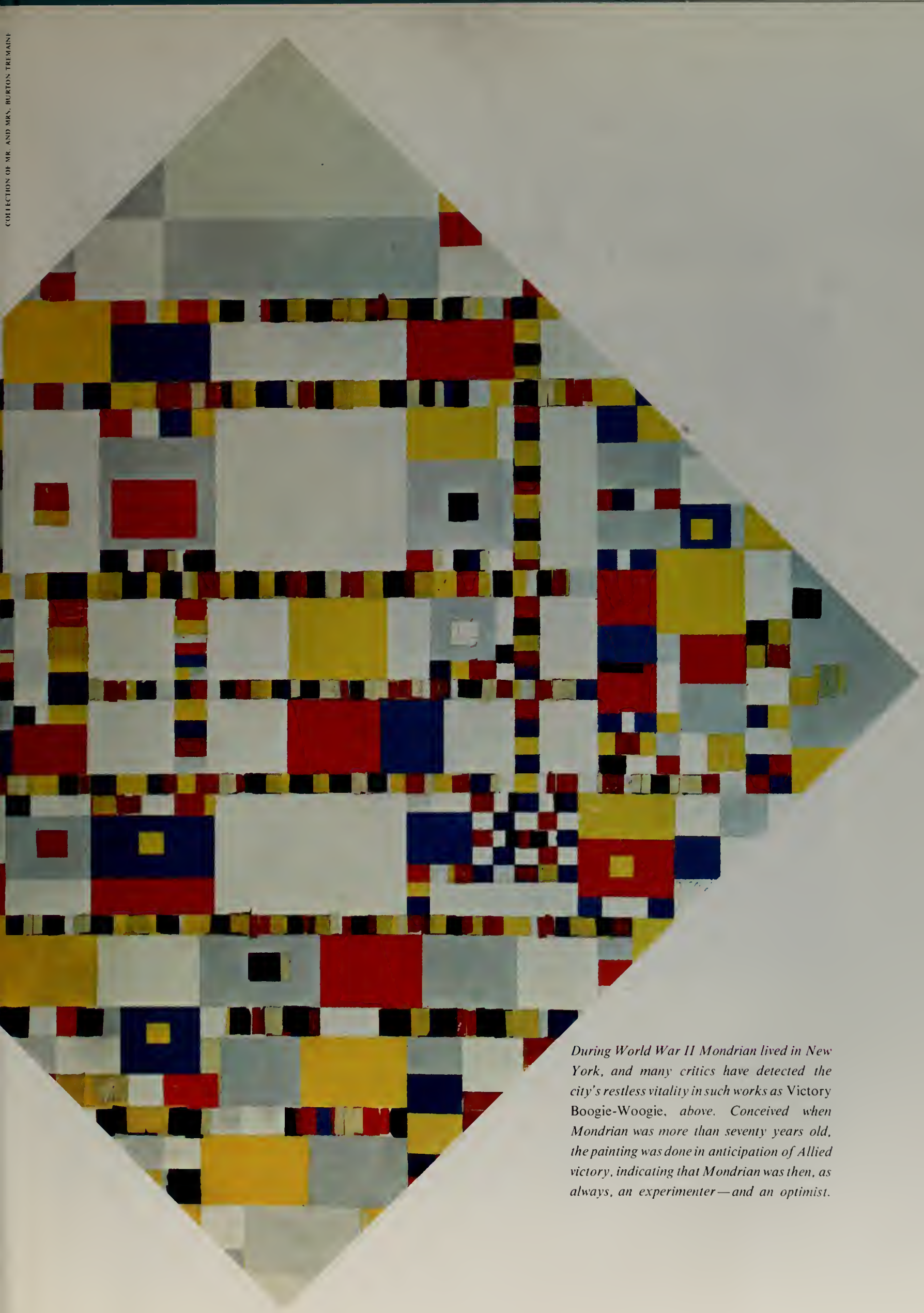
H. JAFFÉ, *Piet Mondrian*, ABRAMS, NEW YORK, 1971

Victory Boogie-Woogie *stands unfinished on the easel in Mondrian's New York studio, where it was found after his death from pneumonia in February, 1944.*

Of course—I need hardly say it—Mondrian's paintings were not rooted in fear alone; there was hard work, thoughtful experimentation, wide acquaintance with the work of others, and a discriminating eye. They are, at their best, modern masterpieces. But if we ask why they are rather than what they are, psychology must take precedence over stylistics and sociology. The paintings embody Mondrian's urge to ward off, to omit, to do without, to silence the imperious demands of passions that, allowed to rise to consciousness, would have been too dangerous to manage, too fearful to face. Painting was, for Mondrian, the aesthetic correlative of his repressions, his way of coming to terms with himself—at once an expression of his problem and an embodiment of his solution. If his famous grids symbolize the sad truth that his only way of life was an ascetic denial of sensuality, they also symbolize, to our lasting delight, his own private salvation.

Peter Gay, who is professor of European intellectual history at Yale, has written frequently for HORIZON. *His essay on "How the Modern World Began" appeared in the Spring, 1973, issue of the magazine. His next book,* Three Variations on the Theme of Cause: Manet, Gropius, and Mondrian, *will be published early this year by Harper & Row.*

COLLECTION OF MR. AND MRS. BURTON TREMAINE



During World War II Mondrian lived in New York, and many critics have detected the city's restless vitality in such works as Victory Boogie-Woogie, *above. Conceived when Mondrian was more than seventy years old, the painting was done in anticipation of Allied victory, indicating that Mondrian was then, as always, an experimenter—and an optimist.*

SARAH BERNHARDT

A goddess to audiences, a godsend to gossip writers, she was really, her exasperated manager complained, "a sculptor who dabbles in the theatre"

By PRISCILLA FLOOD

Sarah the Divine. In her own day she was known as the greatest Frenchwoman since Joan of Arc, the Eighth Wonder of the World, about whom the novelist Edmond de Goncourt declared in all seriousness, "The life of Madame Sarah Bernhardt may prove the greatest marvel of the nineteenth century." One searches in vain for her modern counterpart, but Cornelia Otis Skinner in her biography *Madame Sarah* likened Bernhardt to Napoleon Bonaparte: "Both had burning ambitions for personal glory which each attained. Both were bold adventurers yet careful organizers. Both had chronic ill health yet boundless, self-renewing energy. And both were supreme showmen."

An enterprising photographer named Melandri took the picture at left about 1875 when Sarah, in her early thirties, was the reigning favorite of the Comédie Française. She had recently taken up sculpture and was working on a bust of her sister Regina when Melandri came to her studio on the boulevard de Clichy. It was a large, light room, fitted with the exotic trappings—the fur rugs, potted palms, scented satin pillows—that accompanied Sarah wherever she settled. In her white silk shirt and pants, white slippers, and white tulle scarf (a costume that seems totally unsuited to the messy work of clay modeling), Sarah gazes at us with cool assurance and nonchalance. Melandri later sold prints of this photograph on the streets of Paris, and the fact that Sarah had allowed herself to be photographed in pants—or that she wore them at all—confirmed bourgeois opinion that she led a life of total abandon.

Sarah's career did not begin propitiously. Some twelve years before our photograph was taken, the Comédie Française had signed her on as a probationary actress and given her the title role in Racine's *Iphigénie*. Almost overcome with stage fright, she gave a stiff performance and later the audience remembered chiefly her remarkable thinness. (A favorite joke of the period had it that "An empty carriage pulled up at the stage door and Sarah Bernhardt

got out.") But characteristically it was Sarah's penchant for off-stage melodramatics, not her generally mediocre performances, that caused her dismissal: she broke her parasol over a stage doorkeeper's head, slapped the face of a long-established member of the company, and, to no one's surprise except her own, was asked to resign from the Comédie Française.

After leaving another job with a smaller company, she threatened suicide, but decided instead to travel. In Brussels she fell in love with the young and handsome Prince de Ligne and, soon after her return to Paris, gave birth to their son, Maurice. (History had repeated itself, for Sarah herself was the illegitimate child of a beautiful demimondaine.) Marriage with the prince was out of the question, but Sarah always referred to their affair as *the* love affair of her life.

Determined again to succeed as an actress, she secured a place with the Odéon, on the Left Bank. The second-ranking national theatre of France, the Odéon was more open to experiment than its illustrious sister, the Comédie Française, across the Seine. She worked hard, and soon the critics began to notice the skinny actress with the beautiful voice who, as one critic wrote, "charmed her audience like a little Orpheus."

Sarah spent six years at the Odéon, the adored goddess of Left Bank students and poets. Fashionable and distinguished followers also came to her dressing room or to her flat on the rue de Rome to pay her court. Her unusual features (people said she had the eyes of a cat and the smile of a llama) and wraithlike body did not conform to nineteenth-century standards of feminine perfection. Yet people described her as more than beautiful. One enamored critic, Théodore de Banville, wrote of her: "Deep, shining, liquid eyes, a straight, fine nose, red lips that open like a flower, revealing the sharp whiteness of the teeth, a long and flexible neck. . . . Her brow is crowned with a heavy, enormous, abundant head of hair, very like the unruly tresses of goddesses. . . ."

In 1870 the Siege of Paris brought theatrical life to a standstill. Sarah, an almost hysterical patriot, started a hospital for the wounded in the foyer and lobbies of the Odéon. Though her own health was frail, she labored day and night for months as nurse, hospital administrator, and indefatigable fund raiser. For once, it was said, Sarah was not playing a role.

After the Odéon reopened its doors, Sarah gave her greatest performance yet, in January, 1872, as the queen of Spain in Hugo's *Ruy Blas*. Soon thereafter, the brightest new talent on the Parisian stage rejoined the Comédie Française, and De Banville wrote: "Her voice, like that of a lyre, holds the rhythm and music of poetry. . . . Make no mistake, the engagement of Mlle. Sarah Bernhardt at the Comédie Française is serious and violently revolutionary. It is poetry entering the house of dramatic art: it is the wolf in the fold."

Though her fame was secure, she became obsessed by an urge to paint and sculpt. The actor's art, she complained, was parasitic; she must create a work of art herself. She moved into the studio on the boulevard de Clichy and engaged Mathieu Meusnier, a leading academic sculptor, to give her lessons. Before she had barely grasped the rudiments of modeling, she was tackling large-scale projects. Her work enjoyed some success. The bust of Regina, on the stand in the photograph, was accepted for the Salon of 1875, and in 1876 she won an honorable mention for a grisly figure of an old woman holding the body of a drowned child. She continued to sculpt all her life; even after a leg amputation confined her to a wheelchair—when she was in her seventies—she modeled some figures of her family intended to be placed around her tomb. (They never were.)

Most of the art critics found her work unworthy of mention, and perhaps it was to spite them that Sarah became a critic herself. She romped around the Salon galleries after rehearsals, dictating her opinions to a secretary who followed behind. The next day, her column would appear in *Le Globe*, to circulate "among the avid readers, who *must know* what Sarah thinks of this or that picture."

She had become the most talked about woman in Paris—"Sarah" to everybody, the darling of journalists in search of hot copy. Much of the rumor was of her own making, for she loved to say outrageous things about herself. Of her son, she would say, "I could never make up my mind whether his father was Léon Gambetta, Victor Hugo, or General Boulanger." In fact, the long list of Sarah's admirers—many of whom were probably her lovers as well—includes Gambetta, the fiery Republican leader, the aging Victor Hugo, Prince Napoleon (known as "Plon-Plon"), the Prince of Wales (the future Edward VII), Gustave Flaubert, and numerous other writers, artists, actors, and directors. She was occasionally and disastrously blind to serious character deficiencies: the only man she ever married, Jacques Damala, was a womanizing scoundrel who drained Sarah's bank account to support the morphine habit that eventually killed him.

But the day Melandri took his photograph, that marriage lay some seven years in the future. Also ahead were tours of England, America, and the Continent as director and star of her own company, and public notoriety that would last until her death in 1923—and after. That afternoon, however, as Melandri left the studio, Sarah would be looking forward to the daily gathering of her coterie. (There were said to be three important times in the Parisian day: at one o'clock, Léon Gambetta smokes his second cigar; at four o'clock, prices fall in the Bourse; and at five o'clock, Sarah receives.) Putting aside her sculptor's tools and changing into a delicate tea gown—all white, for that was her favorite color—Sarah would arrange herself artfully against the satin pillows of her studio couch and await her guests.

THE LIFE AND DEATH

In A.D. 750 the noblest city in the Valley of Mexico began inexplicably to fade.

ABOVE: PHILIP TEUSCHER; BELOW: MUSEO NACIONAL DE ANTROPOLOGIA

OF A GREAT CITY

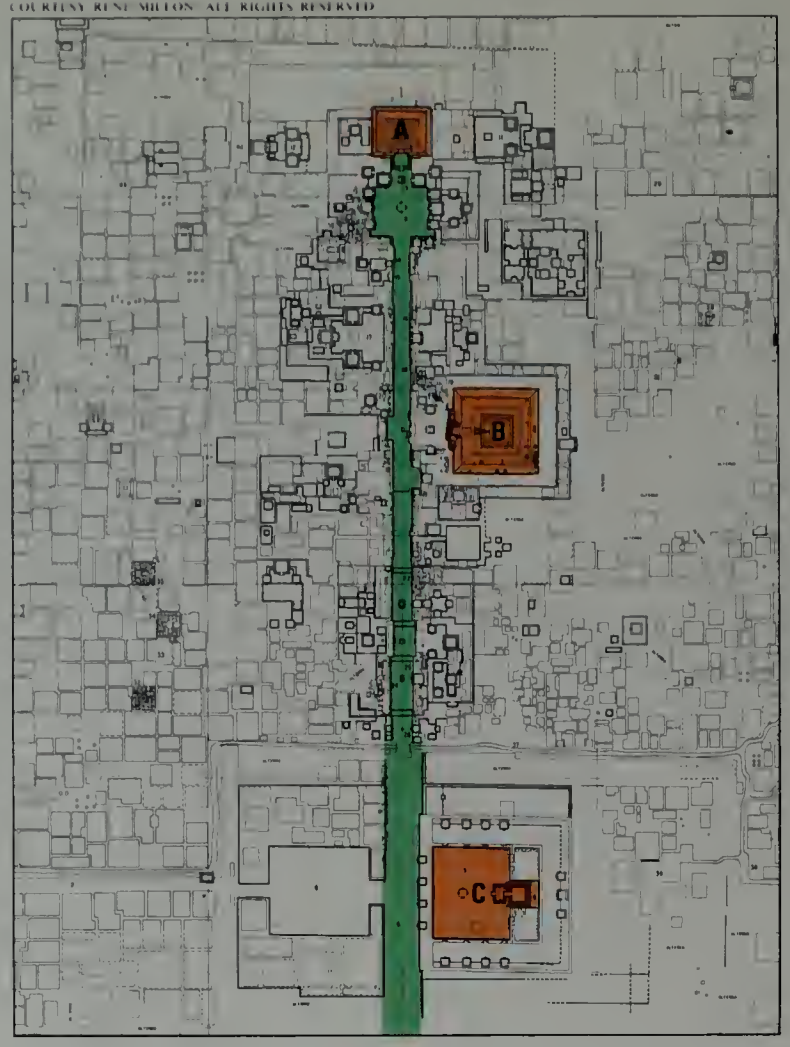
Perhaps we shall soon understand why

By JOHN PFEIFFER

The Pyramid of the Sun, above, was the ceremonial heart of Teotihuacán, dominating the city then as now. To the right is the Street of the Dead, flanked by ruins of religious buildings whose priests may have had features that resembled those of the mask at right.

COURTESY RENÉ MILLON. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

EMMA LANDAU



A map of Teotihuacán's "downtown" area includes the Pyramid of the Moon (A), with the two-mile-long Street of the Dead leading toward the Pyramid of the Sun (B) and Temple of Quetzalcoatl (C).

About fifteen centuries ago, after the sacking of Rome and the onset of Europe's Dark Ages, a great city was on the rise in the New World. The Valley of Mexico provided a spectacular setting: a plain nearly a mile and a half high, surrounded by hills to the north and by mountains forming formidable walls to the east, west, and south. Run-off waters from the mountains drained into a 400-square-mile lake at the center of this natural basin, and the city itself, known as Teotihuacán, lay in a little valley on the northeast shore of the lake.

For more than a generation Teotihuacán has been one of the leading tourist attractions of Mesoamerica. Every year tourists by the tens of thousands leave Mexico City in sightseeing buses headed for "The Pyramids," some thirty miles away, and take the standard guided tour through the partly rebuilt downtown area. They roam along the Street of the Dead, wider than a ten-lane superhighway, past a hundred or more temples and associated buildings and murals and engravings, past the 200-foot-high Pyramid of the Sun with its twelve-acre base (as large as the Great Pyramid at Giza), and on to the Pyramid of the Moon at the end of the avenue.

It is an impressive experience, the long walk among the ruins, but the structures are only a faint shadow of how the city must have looked at its peak. For one thing, all the colors are gone, except for a few patches of faded pink plaster that hint at the brilliance of the past. Pyramids and other buildings, at least those in the downtown area and the outlying apartments of the well-to-do, were painted in polychrome then; the predominant color was probably red, with sections of green and blue and yellow.

Life was stirring not only on main avenues and side streets but also along carefully laid out canals. A system of branching waterways—artificially dredged and straightened portions of a river and its tributary streams as well as canals—formed a network within the city limits and beyond, to the lake some ten miles away. Traffic on the lake probably included a variety of dugout canoes: plain workaday canoes laden with produce and pottery and items of obsidian, and grand "Cadillac" canoes bearing the elite or visiting dignitaries.

The pace of things must have picked up during special holidays, particularly during periodic ceremonies devoted to the rain god, known to the Aztecs as Tlaloc. The city was a sacred as well as a secular center, a prehistoric Mecca and the god's birthplace. Every spring people streamed into Teotihuacán from their farms in the countryside, from other parts of the Valley of Mexico, and from places as far away as Tikal, the Maya city in the jungles of Guatemala, a one-way trip of about five hundred miles. According to conservative estimates by René Millon of the University of Rochester, Teotihuacán had a population of approximately 125,000 persons, and that number may well have doubled when pilgrims came for special festivals.

A millennium later, during the early sixteenth century when Cortes arrived in the Valley of Mexico, the pilgrims were still coming. But by that time the city was in ruins and the pilgrims were Aztecs who knew little about a past so remote, realizing only that something magnificent had once happened here. "Teotihuacán" is their word for "abode of the gods"; "Pyramid of the Sun," "Pyramid of the Moon," and "Street of the Dead" are also translations of Aztec names.

Teotihuacán is currently the focus of ambitious and far-reaching research programs, the first such programs ever devoted to a prehistoric city. Beginning in 1960, three closely related projects, each concentrating on different problems, transformed our knowledge of Teotihuacán. The Mexican government conducted a major excavation program in the center of the city from 1960 to 1964, headed by Dr. Ignacio Bernal, director of Mexico's Museum of Anthropology. During the same period, William Sanders of Pennsylvania State University made an extensive field survey of the Valley of Teotihuacán. And in 1962, Millon and his associates began an intensive program of field surveys, map making, excavation, and computer and other analytic studies of the ancient city.

Millon's Teotihuacán Mapping Project involves investigators at six other universities, and in all, there are now some fifty investigators at more than a dozen universities and museums conducting a wide range of studies, from the exploration and mapping of whole regions to painstakingly detailed analy-

Opposite: Plumed serpents jut out from the façade of the Temple of Quetzalcoatl, with stylized reliefs of shells and rattlesnake tails at right.

A deity, probably female, wears a jade and mosaic mask and sports a huge befeathered headdress in the well-preserved fresco above. Blue bands of water cascade from her hands, and to the left intertwined snakes form a border.

ses of plant and animal remains, pottery fragments, and obsidian artifacts. Understanding more about what happened at Teotihuacán means reconstructing not only buildings but an entire way of life, and, more than that, reconstructing the basic processes responsible for the evolution of early societies everywhere. All this has a certain urgency, since the same processes are shaping today's societies.

Teotihuacán was not a local phenomenon: people had been on the move for centuries throughout the Valley of Mexico and beyond. The hunt for early settlements has been conducted by Sanders in the Valley of Teotihuacán, and by Jeffrey Parsons of the University of Michigan and Richard Blanton of New York's Hunter College in the rest of the Valley of Mexico. Day after day for half a dozen summers they and their students have tramped across the countryside in search formation, lined up twenty-five to a hundred yards apart, looking for traces of prehistoric sites (and contending with, among other things, dogs trained to go after archaeologists and other strangers).

Their main clues are mounds and pieces of broken pottery. Experienced surface collectors have a jargon for identifying characteristic styles and decorations of the fragments—lip sherds, rim sherds, or neck sherds, of lustrous, granular, or thin orange wares, in monochrome or polychrome, fluted, incised, beveled, or grooved—and deducing dates of manufacture to within a century or so. The extent of sherd scattering provides rough estimates of the original settlement areas, and sherd densities provide even rougher estimates of populations. Thus, counts of up to a hundred fragments per square yard indicate populations of four to ten persons per acre; counts of several hundred fragments per square yard indicate as many as twenty persons per acre.

After walking back and forth over a thousand square miles of terrain (about a third of the valley's area), and locating and mapping more than two thousand sites, archaeologists have gathered sufficient information to reconstruct the growth pattern of Teotihuacán. In the beginning its valley resembled an insignificant, out-of-the-way boondocks. The earliest known settlements in the vicinity of the city-to-be date to around

ILLUSTRATIONS ON PAGES 82-83, 87, 90, 92-95 COURTESY OF NEWSWEEK BOOK DIVISION

MUSEO NACIONAL DE ANTROPOLOGIA

A pot of thin orange ware takes the shape of a reclining man, possibly a resting ballplayer. Found buried beneath the floor of an apartment compound, it may once have held offerings for the dead.

400 B.C., and consisted of merely a few hundred people living in one small village and three hamlets, hardly an impressive showing of strength.

As for pomp and circumstance, the real action was going on elsewhere in the Valley of Mexico. In fact, if shrewd real-estate operators had been abroad at the time, they would certainly have been buying up land thirty or more miles to the south and southeast of Teotihuacán. This was the valley's most rapidly growing territory. More than fifty settlements, including at least three or four large villages that featured pyramids, plazas, and other monumental architecture, foreshadowed the coming of institutions and religion and a full-fledged Establishment.

During the next three centuries, however, there were major changes. Population and competition for food and land increased sharply, as indicated by the first appearance of villages on hilltops where they could be defended. The south still held a dominant position, and Cuicuilco, with a population of ten thousand, was the biggest settlement in the Valley of Mexico. But Teotihuacán, a single community by now, was growing fast. Located in an area containing a river fed by eighty permanent springs, it continued to attract farmers and had a population perhaps half as large as that of its rival, Cuicuilco, some forty-odd miles away.

Apparently the rivalry flared into armed conflict on occasion. At least that is one way of interpreting the observation that people in the countryside were concentrating more and more in the hilltop sites, abandoning most surrounding areas and leaving a kind of no man's land between the two centers. Teotihuacán eventually won, and a largely abandoned Cuicuilco was completely destroyed when a volcano erupted near it shortly after the birth of Christ, burying the remains of the once great center under tons of lava. (The ruins of Cuicuilco's main temple lie within present-day Mexico City, not far from the 1968 Olympic Village.)

From then on, the population, and the power, of Teotihuacán soared. A city of some twenty thousand persons shortly before the birth of Christ, its numbers increased two to three times by about A.D. 100 and by A.D. 500 it had reached a population of 125,000 to 200,000 persons. The way the city grew is of special interest. The picture in A.D. 100 was one of urban sprawl, in the sense that the city's population was spread thinly over an area of eight square miles. But by A.D. 500, the same area had seen a great increase in population density, from about five thousand to more than fifteen thousand persons per square mile.

This spectacular phenomenon hints at underlying social trends. Wherever people come together rapidly, wherever mass crowding takes place, the odds are that political controls are tightening significantly—and in the case of Teotihuacán, there was the rise of a rigidly centralized government. The predominance of religious buildings, monumental buildings with impressive murals and stone carvings and no major residential function, indicates that the government was run by priests or priest-kings, at least in the beginning. (A possible shift from a religious to a military dictatorship may have occurred after A.D. 500, as suggested by the first appearance of armed men in murals and painted ceramics.)

As the city grew and consolidated, farmers to the south came down from their defensive hilltop positions to live on and exploit the abundant lowlands more fully. This implies that they no longer had anything to fear, since Teotihuacán was now in complete command of of the area. The extent of the city's power may be revealed in other developments. For example, in one hinterland area local populations declined by more than 60 per cent, probably because people from all over were migrating to the metropolis, and not necessarily of their own free will. Government troops may have forced some of them to move as part of a conscription drive for more workers.

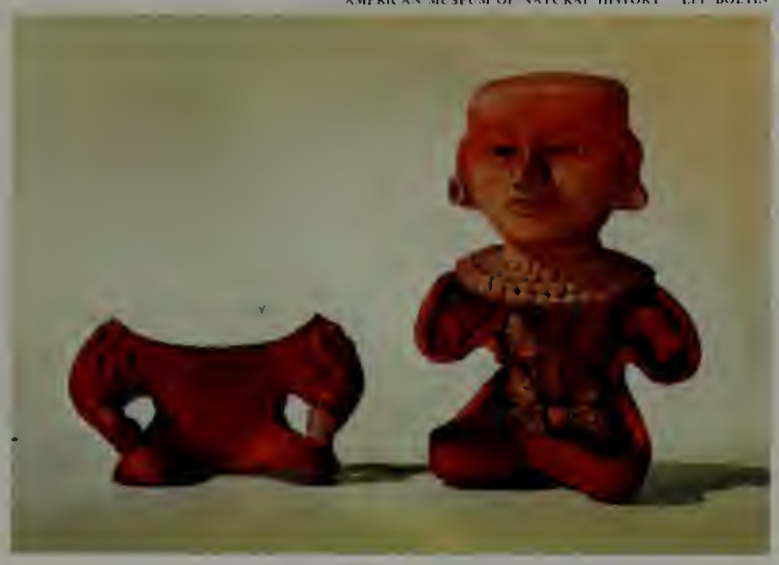
All this adds up to a familiar situation. Then as now, man was being forced to change largely because of his success as a rapidly reproducing species. The regional surveys stress three related elements in the shaping of Teotihuacán: a steady increase in population, a higher concentration of people near the best farmlands, and an emphasis on stricter rules and regulations—all in the name of efficiency.

But there is far more to the story than that, however, and further insights demand not only a panoramic valley-wide view but also a close-up of the city itself.

For more than a decade this intensive phase of the research has been carried out under René Millon's direction. While fellow archaeologists walked miles every day in their broad sweep of the Valley of Mexico, he and his associates conducted an intensive foot-by-foot search for evidence within the city limits and immediate surroundings. They divided the city into 500-meter squares, covered each square systematically, and plotted the positions of more than forty-five hundred sites—temples, apartment

MUSEO NACIONAL DE ANTROPOLOGIA, MEXICO IRMGARD GROTH

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY LEE BOLTIN



The front of this ceramic figurine is removed, like a breastplate, to reveal one large and eight small figures of mysterious meaning, similar to those found inside the statue appearing on page 91.

compounds, plazas, and other architectural units.

Some of their findings are incorporated into a giant map of the city as it existed at its height around A.D. 600, or, rather, a pair of giant maps, each about a hundred square feet in area, which were published recently in a single volume. The "field data" map, printed in the form of 147 separate sections representing as many city squares, indicates the topographic contours and the various locations of archaeological features. The "reconstruction" map, which is also in 147 sections, illustrates how the city may have looked when it was in its prime.

The maps are only the first part of a study expected to produce half a dozen more volumes. But even at this early stage a number of important inferences can be drawn. For example, it seems that the city was more thoroughly planned than investigators had hitherto suspected. According to Millon: "Our mapping revealed that the city's streets and the large majority of its buildings had been laid out along the lines of a precise grid aligned with the city center. . . . The achievement of this kind of order obviously called for an initial vision that is both audacious and self-confident."

The Street of the Dead is the grid's north-south axis. Starting at the Pyramid of the Moon, it runs more than a mile before intersecting the east-west axis. The core area of Teotihuacán, the heart of its sacred and secular activities, is located at this major crossroads. Religious and political affairs were probably conducted in the so-called Citadel, an area covering nearly forty acres and containing fifteen small pyramids, palaces that may have housed high priests, and the six-terraced Temple of Quetzalcoatl, honoring the feathered serpent god. Directly across the Street of the Dead lies a larger area with less spectacular architecture. It may have included the city's main marketplace and been devoted to more mundane matters, such as the flow of food supplies and the carrying on of trade.

The ceremonial center, extending from the crossroads to the Pyramid of the Moon and encompassing associated temples and other buildings, occupied about one square mile. The rest of the city consisted chiefly of "row housing," built of a volcanic rock overlaid with lime plaster and lined up along both sides of long, narrow, cheerless streets—cheerless because the walls were high and thick and windowless, the price of privacy in ancient times.

Things were somewhat brighter inside, where apartments with living rooms, bedrooms, and kitchens surrounded open-air patios. Excavations of these apartment compounds indicate wide differences of class and wealth. The estimated two thousand to twenty-five hundred compounds shown on the "reconstruction" map include dingy little rooms for the city's lowliest inhabitants as well as elite dwellings with ample spaces and elaborate wall murals —some of which survive in surprisingly good condition. (According to Clara Millon, who has been analyzing the wall paintings, a number of them suggest that the Teotihuacános may have developed a form of writing.)

There are also many apartment compounds where groups of fifty to one hundred craftsmen worked and lived, self-contained units maintaining their identity in an urban context. To obtain a better idea of how these communities were organized, Michael Spence of the University of Western Ontario, an investigator for the Teotihuacán Mapping Project, has conducted an analysis of the detailed structure of skeletons that have been uncovered in one small area. He reports that the male skeletons resemble one another more closely than the female skeletons, which suggests that the menfolk may have been blood relatives who tended to live together and bring their wives into the family circle.

At its height the city included more than five hundred communities of craftsmen, which specialized in precious stones, pottery, figurines, and objects made of slate, obsidian, and basalt. They played an important role in the life of Teotihuacán. Indeed, Spence believes that the biggest of these kin industries, the obsidian industry, may have been deeply involved in the city's rise and fall. During the past eight years he has made a special study of obsidian workshops, areas where artifacts and debris of natural volcanic glass are concentrated, and traced their development in some detail.

Around A.D. 1 the city had about twenty thousand persons and a dozen such workshops, which depended chiefly on a gray variety of obsidian found seven miles away in deposits exposed by river action. Their main products were projectile points, suggesting that hunting was a major activity, and small scrapers that may have been used to work hides or wood. Although these and other tools were widely distributed in the city and throughout the Valley of Mexico, some competing workshops have been found outside the Teotihuacán subvalley. Furthermore, it appears that native Teotihuacános did some amateur obsidian shaping, as indicated by chips and flakes found in nonworkshop areas of the metropolis.

After A.D. 1 the obsidian industry grew with the city and became more and more

Highly polished jade figurines, such as the one opposite, may be portraits. The head, with its huge ear spools and hat, dwarfs the small, simply carved body.

An altar with a miniature temple stands in the center of the patio of an apartment compound known as Atetelco. The shrine probably served as a chapel for the hundred or so residents, who lived together for reasons of kinship or work.

of a monopoly. Within the next century or so the number of workshops multiplied at least sixfold. Even more important changes followed. The number of local amateurs and competing workshops elsewhere decreased with the establishment of tighter controls over nearby sources of gray obsidian. Perhaps the mines were guarded, restricted to authorized persons carrying official passes.

We can imagine regular trips to the steep gorges where the deposits were located, and "caravans" of human carriers returning with tons of the valuable material on their backs. As time passed, more and more carriers were mobilized for longer trips to the deep pits that contained abundant deposits of a beautiful green obsidian, the major source of this material in Mesoamerica. It was used increasingly for tools and weapons, and for an "elite" trade in figurines, strange animal-like forms, pierced ornamental disks, and other luxury items—objects that have been found at sites more than six hundred miles away, such as the great Maya center of Tikal.

Teotihuacán made its presence felt in other places, and in other ways. South of Tikal, near the present boundaries of Guatemala City, is a site excavated recently by Sanders and his colleague Joseph Michels. Known as Kaminaljuyú, it experienced a major construction boom starting around A.D. 500. A new central acropolis, or fortified hill, occupied some twenty acres and included a complex of temples, ball courts, and perhaps elite residences—all done in what Sanders describes as "a slavish imitation" of the Teotihuacán style, complete with characteristically stepped or tiered pyramids and the use of volcanic rock overlaid with lime plaster.

It was clearly a takeover, but probably a political rather than a military takeover. For one thing, the construction boom was limited primarily to the acropolis, and the rest of the city retained its native architecture. So in the absence of signs of conquest or mass violence, the inference is that Teotihuacán simply sent its experts to help organize a more centralized government—perhaps headed by a single ruler who could be relied upon in trade dealings—and to see to it that things stayed organized. The experts and their families may have numbered no more than a few hundred in a local population of about four thousand persons.

This permanent delegation undoubtedly represented a variety of interests. For example, supplies of cotton, cacao, and other products were available from farmers in nearby Pacific Coast areas. Primarily, however, the delegation represented the obsidian industry, because control of Kaminaljuyú also brought control of a small hill fifteen miles to the northeast, the site of one of the richest sources of obsidian in the New World.

By this time Teotihuacán probably had about 350 obsidian workshops. A large proportion of them are definitely known to have served local and outside needs, their products having been found throughout the city and elsewhere. But at least half the shops were making thousands and thousands of "missing" implements, specially designed knives and projectile points, for people and purposes unknown. These distinctive artifacts have been found only in workshop areas, and nowhere else in the city itself or in all of Mesoamerica. They may have been stashed away in hidden places, perhaps for military use, but no evidence presently exists for this or for any other theory.

Many other urban problems confront archaeologists concerned with the large-scale trade networks that generally flourish with the appearance of densely populated centers. People in masses develop new desires, needs for things they never required when they were living in smaller groups; and more often than not the job of obtaining those things complicates life considerably, since it means dealing with other people's needs. For some reason the pressure is always toward expansion, toward bringing more and more resources under direct control, a process that rarely seems to level off—perhaps because people tend to expect more and more.

We have some reason to believe that trade pressures at Teotihuacán may have been intimately connected with the technology and the sheer logistics of feeding a large population. Corn was the staple in prehistoric Mesoamerica as it is today, and the tortilla was the staff of

JOSEPH W. BALL

A strange terra-cotta statue recently excavated at Becan, above, reveals Teotihuacân influence far to the south in Maya territory. Ten smaller figurines were found in its hollow body, which sits in a typically Maya pot. A cultural continuity existed throughout Mesoamerica, as the alabaster jaguar below—an image familiar to the Olmecs—suggests.

BRITISH MUSEUM

life, judging by the remains of numerous clay griddles that were used for frying the flat round bread. Individual ears of corn were puny compared with our hybrid giants, only about three and a half inches long, but they were a major agricultural advance when compared with the earliest known half-inch dwarfs of around 5000 B.C.

Sanders has arrived at a number of estimates that emphasize the importance of corn. For example, assuming that the grain made up 60 per cent of daily caloric requirements, which is probably on the conservative side, the average person would consume some twelve ounces a day, mostly in the form of tortillas. With a population of 125,000, that means more than 93,000 pounds of corn a day. Surveys of farmlands surrounding the city indicate that this demand could have been met locally, that is, within a radius of about fifteen miles. But think of the army of carriers and the administrative machinery required to harvest and store and schedule the flow of supplies.

The Teotihuacáno diet contained many items besides corn. In fact, as the population grew, it consumed not only more food but a wider variety of foods. Richard Ford of the University of Michigan has analyzed plant remains from a mapping-project excavation of more than thirty superimposed kitchen floors and hearths in a high-status apartment compound dating from the city's peak period. He believes that practically everything edible was consumed, including beans, squash, and chili peppers as well as an ample selection of wild plants such as sumac seeds, at least two varieties of goosefoot (used today mainly as herbs), a kind of tomato, and portulaca leaves. Ford also reports the first fish remains ever recovered from occupation levels in the Valley of Mexico, large quantities of bones representing a species that specialists have so far been unable to identify.

The meat situation, as deduced from the preliminary work of David Starbuck at Yale University, another investigator associated with the mapping project, is especially interesting. Counts of fossil pollen reveal progressive deforestation in the Teotihuacán region, a steep decline in Mexican cypresses and other once abundant trees as people cleared more and more land for farming. And yet, as far as Starbuck can tell from the proportions of excavated bones, there was no corresponding decline in the numbers of forest-dwelling deer. This suggests a strict conservation policy limiting hunting, a marked increase in the size of the area supplying food to the city, or some sort of regular "harvesting" of controlled herds. Similarly, jack rabbit and cottontail populations

seem to have remained steady, although that does not imply domestication since these species have generally managed to breed faster than their predators can eat. Dogs provided another steady source of meat for Teotihuacános.

Food seems to have been in reasonably good supply. But there probably was not much excess, particularly since estimates of population do not include the influx of pilgrims and other visitors into the city. A bad crop year or two could have upset fragile supply-demand balances, and bad years were common: a corn crop was lost about one out of every three to five years. So, if for no other reason than subsistence insurance, it would have been sound policy to establish, and upon occasion enforce, favorable trade relations with relatively distant corn-producing areas.

We have much to learn about these and related matters, and the crucial challenge is figuring out what sort of evidence can be found to prove or disprove alternative theories. For example, there is the formidable problem of why Teotihuacán suddenly collapsed. A dramatic sign of its downfall is the burning of many buildings in the city's center, although there is no evidence to indicate whether invaders or rebels from within were responsible, or whether the whole thing was accidental. Other signs include an accelerating decline in population and a subtle architectural change marked by the sealing off of doorways and the partitioning of large rooms into smaller rooms, a faint suggestion

The Boogaloo? Or perhaps the Twist? A group of clay dancers gyrates wildly in some forgotten ritual. In their outstretched hands they doubtless carried symbolic objects, long since destroyed. The true significance of groups of figures like these remains unknown, for archaeologists have never found them in their original Teotihuacán setting.

that the elite were starting to dwindle in number.

What had happened? Someday we may be able to answer that question fully, but as of now we know far too little about human nature and the life of cities. One critical element was almost certainly the primitive state of the art of empire-building. It may be that Teotihuacán had reached the limits of political power in terms of how much land a prehistoric government, that is, a government operating without the benefit of animal transport or wheeled vehicles, could manage to control.

In any case, certain facts are clear. Teotihuacán started going downhill around A.D 750, and within fifty years or so it was no longer a city. Its population had shrunk to about thirty thousand persons living in three or four towns and villages in the area once occupied by the city. As Millon notes, its distinctive residential unit, the apartment compound, disappeared, never to return as a standard unit in ancient cities in central

DIEGO RIVERA MUSEO ANAHUACALLI — IN MORAD GROUP

Mexico. Teotihuacán had lost its magic, and it no longer functioned as a top-ranking power. According to Sanders, it had become "a backwater in a highly sophisticated state whose center was elsewhere."

In a fundamental sense, even after years of excavating and restoring the temple and elite areas, the study of this early metropolis has just begun. The Teotihuacán Mapping Project has yielded an enormous amount of material, including more than 1,250,000 sherds and other artifacts, far too much to be analyzed without the aid of a high-speed computer.

During their intensive survey of the city, archaeologists recorded everything on special data sheets. They noted the size and location of each site or distinct architectural unit, as well as a long list of other facts—land contours; materials used in walls and floors; total number of sherds; and numbers of sherds for each of more than two dozen pottery types and some ten time periods; numbers and types for obsidian and jade, for corn-grinding stones, projectile points, shovels, worked and unworked bone fragments, and many more details. In all, the complex data sheets record a total of 281 items of information about each of the city's more than forty-five hundred individual sites, and all that information has been duly fed into electronic memory devices to form what is probably the world's largest archaeological computer data file.

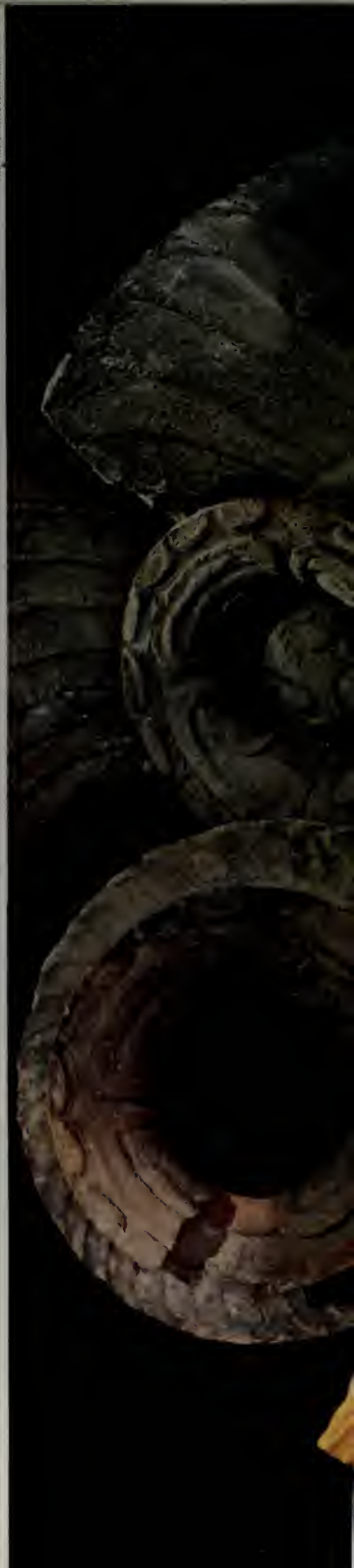
George Cowgill of Brandeis University, in charge of the computer project, recently consulted the file to help in understanding the city better. Using sherd density as a rough index of population density and general social activity, he prepared a program that asked the computer to print out maps showing block-by-block sherd distributions for the entire city at different periods.

Examination of the maps has revealed a number of intriguing features. For instance, sherd densities were unexpectedly high for the period from about 150 B.C. to the birth of Christ, when the city increased from a few thousand to perhaps twenty thousand persons. "Hot spots," places of extra-high sherd concentration, confirm earlier findings and indicate that things were stirring especially in the northwest part of the city. This area, as well as a less dense but "enigmatic" area near the Citadel, is now high on the list of priorities for future excavation and more detailed analysis and mapping.

The more one studies Teotihuacán, the less remote it seems. The city is not merely something that happened long ago in another time and another place. It is gone, to be sure, but continuing investigations are providing detailed information that would have been considered unobtainable only a few years ago. Moreover, there is much more to come from intense studies of prehistoric societies and contemporary urban societies as well. Today we also face problems of rising populations and struggles for power, and our firsthand experiences can throw light on the successes and failures of times past. In the last analysis, we are not all that different from our remote ancestors; that essential realization, perhaps more than any other single point, distinguishes modern from old-fashioned archaeology.

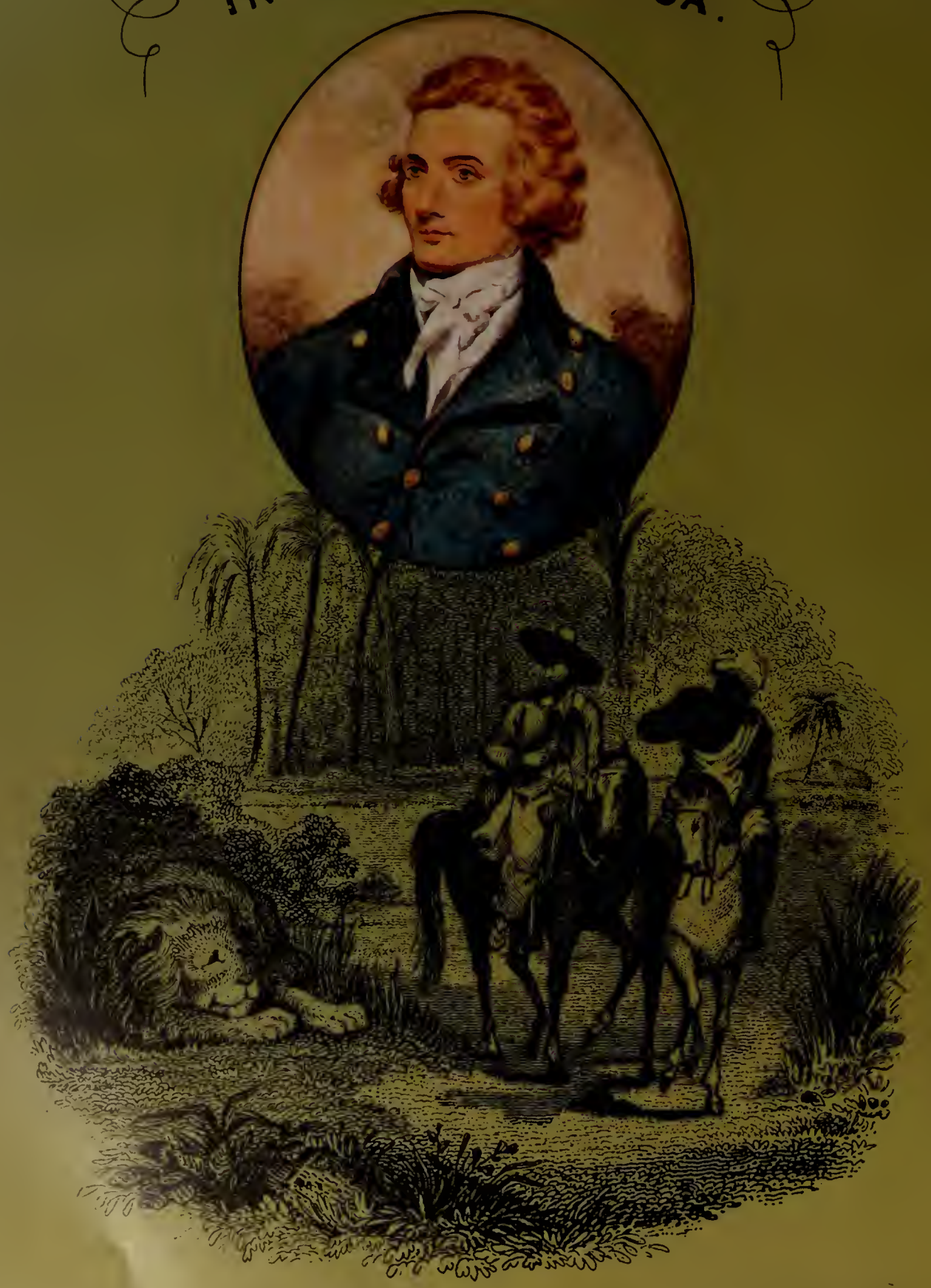
This principle can work the other way, too. The past has much to tell the present and the future, and the Teotihuacán research programs, with their surveys and maps and computerized files, can provide basic insights into present-day successes and failures. To have before us in clear perspective the life process of a prehistoric city—its birth and growth and death—may be of some help in understanding, and dealing with, the forces at large in the turbulent cities of today.

John Pfeiffer, who writes frequently for HORIZON *on ancient metropolises, lives in New Hope, a village (population 1,000) in the wilds of Bucks County, Pennsylvania.*


THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

Originally a volcanic fire deity, the benign Old God appears at right in the guise of a deeply wrinkled pottery mask bearing the attributes of birds and butterflies.

LIFE AND TRAVELS
OF
MUNGO PARK
with a full narrative of
Subsequent Adventure
IN CENTRAL AFRICA.



In Africa the explorer Mungo Park and his guide encounter a ferocious-looking, but unhungry, lion. A medallion portrait of Park is superimposed on the title page of his own account of his adventures.

On July 23, 1794, the African Association, a London club of twelve wealthy dilettantes dedicated to the exploration of "the Inland Parts of That Quarter of the World," resolved to send a young Scotsman, Mungo Park, to find information on "the rise, the course, and termination of the Niger, as well as the various nations that inhabit its borders."

It was on the river Niger that the association's interest was focused, for the Niger, more than anything else, embodied the unattainable. A river does not hide, it does not deceive. And yet the Niger had kept the secret of its course and termination for more than two thousand years. Did it flow east or west? Was it merely a branch of another major African river, the Congo or the Nile? Did it empty into the Atlantic, into a salt lake in the heart of Africa, or into the Mediterranean, after crossing the Sahara underground?

The Niger was a jewel protected by multiple safety devices: the lethal climate, the physical barriers of the Sahara and the rain forest, and the human barriers of Christian-hating Moslems and acquisitive blacks. But its best protection was its own shape. It flowed northward until it reached the Sahara and then abruptly changed direction and headed south. It did not seem possible that the 2,600-mile-long Niger—the tenth longest river in the world, originating only 150 miles from the Atlantic—was the same river that divided into hundreds of creeks in a mangrove delta 1,500 miles to the east and spilled into the Gulf of Guinea.

The prime mover of the African Association was Sir Joseph Banks, heir to a large fortune and himself a botanist and explorer. It was Banks who discovered the association's most renowned protégé, Mungo Park. A medical student at Edinburgh, Park itched to travel. When he finished his studies in 1791 at the age of twenty, he came to London and, through his brother-in-law, James Dickson, met the eminent Sir Joseph. Banks, who may have seen in this young doctor eager for new horizons a reflection of himself in earlier days, soon found Park a position as ship's surgeon on a Sumatra-bound East India Company ship.

Park returned a year later, more eager for adventure than ever, and in 1794 he offered his services to the African Association. Although his offer was accepted in July, Park's departure was delayed so that an escort of fifty men could be recruited. Impatient to set out, Park decided to leave alone in May, 1795. He was not yet twenty-four years old, a fine-featured, high-browed young man, six feet tall, handsome in a romantic, wavy-haired, Byronic manner. As he told one of his brothers, there was no doubt in his mind that he would "acquire a greater name than any ever did."

Park left England aboard the brig *Endeavour,* a trading ship bound for Gambia, armed with a letter of credit for two hundred pounds and an introduction to Dr. John Laidley, a fellow Scotsman who traded in slaves at Pisania, on the Gambia River. Crossing took thirty days. After Park reached Jillifree, on the northern bank of the Gambia, he proceeded directly upriver to Pisania, where he was grateful for Laidley's hospitality.

Englishmen arriving in West Africa for the first time invariably caught a fever they called "the seasoning." Park was ill with it during most of August and did not leave Pisania until December, after the start of the dry season. He set out with an English-speaking Mandingo guide called Johnson, a slave called Demba, a horse, two asses, food, a sextant, a compass, a thermometer, two fowling pieces, four pistols, and an umbrella.

He had not gone far when he was stopped by a native who said he had to pay duty to the king of Walli. This was to become the most familiar aspect of African travel. Everywhere there were native kings, some of whom controlled no more than a few villages, and one of their main sources of revenue was the duty they could extract from travelers. As Park discovered, everything had to be paid for—passage, water, and wood.

Park's route led him through Medina and Bondou. The king of Bondou was suspicious: he could not believe a white man would come that far unless he was a trader. Park cheered him up by giving him the umbrella, "which he repeatedly furled and unfurled to the great admiration of himself and his two attendants, who could not for some time comprehend the use of this wonderful machine."

Park discovered on this occasion how like greedy children these African potentates could be. The Bondou king wanted his blue coat with shiny yellow buttons. "The request of an African prince in his own dominions," Park commented, "comes little short of a command . . . and as it was against my interest to offend him by a refusal, I very quietly took off my coat, the only good one in my possession, and laid it at his feet."

So far, the natives had only gone after his goods. Now that he was advancing into Islamic Africa, he would have more serious worries. When he reached the town of Jarra in the Moorish kingdom of Ludamar, his guide, Johnson, and his other attendants, with the exception of the young slave Demba, were so frightened by the Moors that they deserted him. As Park crossed Ludamar, the Moors "hissed, shouted, and . . . even spit in my face," and when they discovered he was a Christian, they decided his property was "lawful plunder."

Worse was to come, for he was seized by Moorish horsemen and taken to a collection of dirty tents on the edge of the desert, the residence of Ali, the Ludamar king. There he was kept prisoner for two and a half months and continuously threatened and humiliated. Women counted his fingers and toes to make sure he was human. They tried to make him eat wild pig, which he prudently declined. They made him continuously remove and put on his clothes, for they had never seen buttons.

On March 20 a council was called to decide what to do with the Christian prisoner. Messengers brought Park the good news: he would lose only his right hand, his eyes would be put out because

TITLE PAGE: MUNGO PARK, *Travels in Africa,* EDINBURGH, 1941 NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY; PORTRAIT NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON

they were like the eyes of a cat, he would be put to death. The hazing continued. When he lay ill with fever, his cloak was taken from him, and when he walked under shade trees on the edge of camp, youths aimed an unloaded pistol at him.

Moorish ladies took a kindlier interest in the handsome doctor. On March 25 a group of them came into his tent "and gave me plainly to understand that the object of their visit was to ascertain, by actual inspection, whether the rite of circumcision extended to the Nazarenes. . . . I observed that it was not customary in my country to give ocular demonstration in such cases before so many beautiful women; but that if all of them would retire, except the young lady to whom I pointed (selecting the youngest and handsomest) I would satisfy her curiosity. The ladies enjoyed the jest and went away laughing heartily; and the young damsel herself to whom I had given preference (though she did not avail herself of the privilege of inspection) seemed in no way displeased at the compliment, for she soon afterward sent me some meal and milk for my supper."

Eventually, Park escaped from his Moorish purgatory. Free at last, he found that "even the desert seemed pleasant." But he had no water. "Here must the short span of my life come to an end," he thought. As if thirst was not enough, a sandstorm engulfed him; but behind the storm there was relief. Park was "agreeably surprised by some very vivid flashes of lightning, followed by a few heavy drops of rain." He spread out his clothes to collect the rain, and "for more than an hour it rained plentifully, and I quenched my thirst by wringing and sucking my clothes."

Park finally joined a friendly group of Bambaras and headed eastward. It was with them, two weeks later, on July 20, 1796, ten months after leaving England, that Mungo Park first saw the Niger. They were close to the town of Ségou, "where, as I was anxiously looking around for the river, one of them called out, *geo affili!* ('see the water') and looking forwards, I saw with infinite pleasure the great object of my mission—the long-sought-for, majestic Niger, glittering to the morning sun, as broad as the Thames at Westminster, and flowing slowly *to the eastward.*"

Actually, the Niger at Ségou is twice as wide as the Thames at Westminster. But this was a minor point compared to Park's achievement in settling a 2,000-year-old controversy over the Niger's course. Park was not surprised, for every native along the way had told him that it flowed toward the rising sun.

When he arrived at Ségou, King Mansong would not receive the penniless explorer, and went to the unusual length of sending him a bag of five thousand cowries to induce him to leave. Continuing along the river, Park suffered from the heat and the swarms of mosquitoes. On July 29 both he and his horse collapsed. He was now worn down by sickness, exhausted by hunger and fatigue, half naked, penniless, and on foot. He did not have enough cowries left to hire a canoe, and the tropical rains had set in, obstructing overland travel. He could not count on charity, for he was again entering the land of the Moors, and he dreaded falling into the hands of those "merciless fanatics." He decided to turn back.

Park by now looked so ragged that a kindly native gave him a cloth to cover him. He waded across miles of flooded savannah, knee-deep in water, shaky from fever. The word had spread that he was a Bambara spy: towns closed their gates when he appeared, and natives chased him with sticks as they would have a stray dog. Passing Bamako, he was crossing steep, rocky ground on August 25 when he was surrounded by armed men. They stripped him naked, and even inspected his halfboots, the sole of one of which was fastened to his foot with a broken bit of bridle. When Park reached for his precious pocket compass on the ground, one of the bandits cocked his musket. They finally left him with a shirt, a pair of trousers, and his hat, having noticed that there were papers in the crown and fearing magic.

Park sat down in the wilderness, naked and alone. It appeared that nothing remained for him but to lie down and die. A small moss flower of extraordinary beauty caught his eye. "Though the whole plant," he wrote, "was no larger than one of my fingers, I could not contemplate the delicate formation of its roots, leaves and capsules without admiration. Can that Being who planted, watered, and brought to perfection, in this obscure part of the world, a thing which appears of so small importance, look with unconcern upon the situation and suffering of creatures formed after his own image? Surely not." Unexpectedly reminded of the divine scheme of things, Park decided there was no place in it for despair. He started up, "assured that relief was at hand: and I was not disappointed." At the next town, he was received with kindness, and later some of his stolen clothes were recovered.

On September 16 Park arrived in Kamalia, and a native trader sending slaves to Gambia offered to take him along. They waited out the rainy season and after several delays finally set out on April 19, 1797. On June 10 the coffle reached the point near Pisania where Park had set out eighteen months before. Villagers told him he was believed killed by the Moors, and that none of his servants had returned.

On June 15 an American slaver, the *Charlestown,* entered the Gambia and loaded one hundred and thirty slaves. Park went aboard as ship's surgeon on June 17. The ship was bound for South Carolina, but it was a leaky hulk and had to change its course to Antigua, which it reached thirty-five days later. From Antigua, Park took the Chesterfield packet and arrived at Falmouth, England, on December 22, 1796.

Back in London, Park was warmly received by Sir Joseph Banks and the other members of the African Association. He was their first successful explorer and he had solved the riddle of the Niger. Park was lionized even though London hostesses thought he had "the manner and dignities of his

Niger kings." He had no fondness for small talk, and seemed aloof and disdainful.

Banks urged him to set down at once the tale of his adventures. The notes Park had written on little bits of paper and stored in the crown of his hat prodded his memory. *Travels in the Interior of Africa* took a year to write, was published in 1799, and sold out its first edition of fifteen hundred copies in a week. It was "a plain, unvarnished tale," written with verve and considerable literary skill, and it was the first African travel book published in English.

In the summer of 1798 Park went back to Scotland and fell in love. Pretty Ailie Anderson was the magnet that for the moment kept him from further travel, and Park married her in the summer of 1799. The young couple moved to Peebles, where Park put a brass plate on his door and settled down to the quiet life of a country doctor.

In the fall of 1802 Park was summoned to London to meet the colonial secretary, who asked him to head another mission to discover the termination of the Niger, this time with a military escort. Park thought it over. He had a wife and three children, a growing medical practice, and his first trip had left him with "an inveterate dyspepsia."

But ambition pulled more strongly, and he yielded to "the demon of unrest." The necessary arrangements for an expedition of some size—the first African exploration to be sponsored by the British government—took longer than expected. Park delegated his brother-in-law, Alexander Anderson, as second-in-command, and hired his friend George Scott as draftsman. He was also authorized to draw up to five thousand pounds from the treasury, and arranged that his wife should receive four thousand pounds in case of his death.

A ship had to be found and provisions and equipment bought. Ideally, Park should have landed in Gorée in November, at the start of the dry season. As it was, he and his party did not sail from Portsmouth aboard the troopship *Crescent* until January 31, 1805, and the crossing took two months. The expedition should have been delayed until the following year, but Park was confident that he could reach the Niger before the heavy July rains. This lack of judgment concerning the realities of West African travel was to have disastrous results.

Besides, Park was a different man on his second trip. His mistreatment at the hands of the Moors still rankled, and he was determined to meet their hostility with his own. As for the natives, they were "all thieves." This time, he came as a conqueror, imperious and blinded by a self-confidence that reached manic proportions.

The *Crescent* dropped her anchor off Gorée on March 28, 1805, and Park set about recruiting his military escort from the Royal African Corps garrisoned there. Nearly all the men were convicts and deserters whose punishment in England had been commuted "on expressing the desire to serve His Majesty abroad." The inducement was double pay during the trip with Park and a discharge from the corps when they returned. This sounded so good that almost every man in the garrison volunteered, as did an officer, Lieutenant John Martyn. Park recruited thirty-three soldiers and two sailors from the crew of a frigate; with five other men, plus Anderson, Scott, Martyn, and himself, the party numbered forty-four.

Park mistook the motives of the volunteers and failed to understand that the promise of relief from the tedium of garrison life and eventual freedom did not amount to genuine enthusiasm. He was full of confidence. "I have little doubt," he wrote, "but that I shall be able, with presents and fair words, to pass through the country to the Niger; and if once we are fairly afloat, the day is won."

In reality, nothing was less promising than Park's departure from Gorée in April. Soon the rains would start and the country would turn into a swamp. Tropical heat would weaken his men and fever would strike. The alternative would have been a seven-month postponement until November, which was not in keeping with Park's ebullient temperament.

They sailed up the Gambia in the *Crescent* on April 6 and reached Kayes, where Park hired an English-speaking Mandingo guide named Isaaco. On the first day, Park learned that an expedition of more than forty men presented an entirely different set of problems from traveling alone. Donkeys got stuck in a swamp, some of his men fell behind, and others lost their way. In Pisania, six days were lost redistributing the supplies and equipment and buying more donkeys, who were marked with red paint against theft. Park had never commanded troops and was unable to enforce a discipline of march. Straggling was the rule, and each day Park had to double back to look for lost men and animals.

On May 15 the party suffered its first casualty. A soldier named John Walters had an epileptic fit and died. By now, two others had dysentery, the guide Isaaco had been kidnaped by natives and had to be rescued, and the party had been attacked by a swarm of bees that killed six donkeys and a horse. Park wrote his wife on May 29: "We are half through our journey without the smallest accident or circumstance."

On June 8 another man died, this one of dysentery, and on June 10 the rains began. It was like an announcement of doom that shook Park's optimism for the first time, for they were still traveling overland and were only half-way to Ségou. Park had written Banks that he had "high hopes" of reaching the Niger by June 27 . In fact, the ragged remnants of his column did not reach it until August 19. By that time, three quarters of his men had perished and all of his pack animals had died or been stolen.

Humane standards of conduct had been forgotten and survival became the only rule. By June 18 Park was no longer burying the dead. The news spread from village to village that the white men were sick and could not defend their goods. Thieves, who at first had worked at night, now appeared in broad daylight. On July 14, as one native asked for

snuff, another snatched a musket out of Park's hands. The thieves grew so bold that not even warning shots stopped them from stealing the loaded donkeys.

In adversity, Park became a figure of heroic stature. The other officers were too ill to help, and he had to assume all the burdens of the expedition. His own stamina and resistance to fever were amazing. In addition to treating his sick, he had to find food, deal with village chiefs, keep the men and animals moving, and fight off thieves. He had to leave one man behind after trying to keep him on a horse for six miles. He had to leave his friend George Scott behind. At one point, he found Alexander Anderson, his brother-in-law, under a bush, "apparently dying. I took him on my back and carried him across the stream. . . . Carried over the load of the ass which I drove, got over the ass, Mr. Anderson's horse etc. Found myself much fatigued, having crossed the stream sixteen times." Anderson could go no further and had to be carried on a litter.

On August 19 Park once again felt the excitement of seeing the Niger. As the discoverer of its course, he must have felt a proprietary interest in the river. "Coming to the brow of a hill," he wrote, "I once more saw the Niger rolling its immense stream along the plain." By now, he had only ten men left, and most of them were ill. Worse yet, his own health began to fail at the end of August.

Upon reaching Bamako, Park and what was left of his column hired canoes to take them downriver. On September 19 they stopped outside Ségou where emissaries of King Mansong came to meet him. What Park told them on that occasion seemed tactful and appropriate, but undoubtedly contributed to his downfall:

> I am the white man who nine years ago came into Bambara. I then came to Ségou and requested Mansong's permission to pass to the Eastwards; he not only permitted me to pass, but presented me with 5,000 cowries to purchase provisions on the road. . . . This generous conduct has made Mansong's name much respected in the land of the white people. . . . You all know that the white people are a trading people and that all the articles of value . . . are made by us. If you speak of a good gun, who made it? The white people. . . . We sell them to the Moors, who bring them to Timbuktoo where they sell them at a higher rate. . . . Now, the king of the white people wishes to find out a way by which we may bring our own merchandise to you and sell everything at a much cheaper rate. . . . For this purpose, if Mansong will permit me to pass, I propose sailing down the Joliba [Niger] to the place where it mixes with the salt water, and if I find no rocks or danger in the way, the white man's small vessels will come up to trade. . . . What I have now spoken I hope and trust you will not mention . . . for if the Moors should hear of it, I shall certainly be murdered before I reach the salt water.

In telling King Mansong's emissaries that he planned to undercut the Moorish middlemen, Park was unnecessarily exposing himself to Moorish retaliation. And in the light of what would happen, Park's rash summary of his intentions was a costly error.

Park sent gifts to King Mansong, and two days later he received the promise of a canoe and safe passage. But the king was as reluctant to meet him as he had been nine years before. Bypassing Ségou, Park waited in Sansanding for the promised canoe. It was a long wait, and he decided to put the time to profit by trading his surplus goods for cowrie shells in the open market. His delight with his success made him unaware that he was infuriating the Moorish traders.

In the meantime, two more men died on October 2, and on October 28 Park was particularly affected by the death of his brother-in-law. "No event which took place during the journey," he wrote, "ever threw the smallest gloom over my mind till I laid Mr. Anderson in the grave. I then felt myself as if left a second time, lonely and friendless, amidst the wilds of Africa."

Park had no time to dwell on his misery, for two half-rotten canoes arrived from King Mansong, and he set about converting them into a single river-worthy vessel, which he named *Joliba* after the native name for the river, to carry his few remaining men down the Niger. Two weeks later, a message arrived from King Mansong urging Park to get started before the Moors learned of his plans. Park seems to have considered the possibility of ambush, for he bought bullock skins to protect his boat from spears and arrows. On November 16, he wrote: "All ready and we sail tomorrow morning, or evening." The last entry in his journal, a scrap of botanical information, is dated on the same day and reads: "There are no shea trees in Kong or Gotto, and very few in Baedoo."

The Mandingo guide Isaaco was heading back to Pisania with Park's journal and letters. In his letter to his wife, Park was able to manage a tone of rather forced optimism after breaking the news that her brother was dead. "I think," he wrote, "it is not unlikely but I shall be in England before you receive this."

Park's true feelings were best expressed in his letter to the colonial secretary, Lord Camden. He had, he wrote, "the fixed resolution to discover the termination of the Niger. . . . Although all the Europeans who are with me should die and although I myself were half dead, I would still proceed, and if I could not succeed in the object of my journey, I would at least die on the Niger."

Park was in a do-or-die frame of mind. He was taking a makeshift boat down an uncharted river whose banks were occupied by Christian-hating Tuaregs and rapacious blacks. His escort was down to three soldiers, Lieutenant Martyn, three slaves to paddle the boat, and a guide named Ahmadi Fatouma. One of the soldiers was crazed with fever, and Lieutenant Martyn was a brutal, hard-drinking man.

On November 20, 1805, Park and his pathetic band pushed off from shore, and disappeared down the Niger into the troubled waters of historical conjecture. He was never heard from again.

Nearly a year later, on September 21,

1806, the British consul in the Moroccan city of Mogador, James Grey Jackson, wrote Banks that Park was said to have reached Timbuktu. Another mention of Park was made, astonishingly, in a Bombay newspaper, which in 1809 reported his violent death, based on the account of an Abyssinian pilgrim who had been to Mecca. Obviously these far-flung rumors would not do, and the only way to find out anything certain was to send someone on Park's tracks. The Mandingo guide Isaaco volunteered to go into the interior in 1810, and proved to be an enterprising reporter, for near Sansanding he found the only man who could tell the story of Park's death, the guide Ahmadi Fatouma.

Upon seeing Isaaco, Fatouma burst into tears and said "they are all dead." He then proceeded to tell his story. Park, expecting trouble, had taken fifteen muskets and plenty of ammunition on board, and enough provisions so they would not have to land. He knew he was crossing territory controlled by Moorish tribes, and decided that the only way to avoid capture was to remain on the river and fight off attacks.

He must have realized he was violating local custom, which required that travelers ask each local chief for permission to pass and pay a toll. By refusing to stop and pay and by firing at everyone who got in his way, Park was making enemies everywhere he went.

The *Joliba* came under more or less constant attack. Hostile natives prevented Park from going up the canal leading to Kabara, the river port five miles from Timbuktu. Beyond Kabara, one of the three soldiers died. "On passing Timbuktoo," Ahmadi Fatouma told Isaac, "we were again attacked by three canoes, which we beat off, killing one of the natives."

Ahmadi's account was vague on dates, but eventually Park and his men got through the Moorish-held lands on the Niger bend, passed Gao, and started on the Niger's southward section. He passed the rapids at Ansongo, and headed into Hausa country in present-day Nigeria. When, in March or April, 1806, he reached the small kingdom of Yauri on the Niger's left bank, he had traveled about 1,500 miles of the river's total course of 2,600 miles and was only about 600 miles from the sea. It was an impressive achievement.

Ahmadi's contract ended in Yauri, and Park, contrary to his own rules, accompanied him ashore with gifts for the king. The chief, according to Ahmadi, accepted the presents and asked Park whether he intended to come back the same way. Park said he did not and took his leave. According to Ahmadi, the king was displeased with his presents, and the next morning, he sent troops downstream to intercept Park at the Bussa rapids, where a rock shelf spanned the river, broken only by a narrow gate-like opening.

It was a perfect spot for an ambush, particularly since in the spring the river was low. According to Ahmadi's account, "this army went and took possession of the top of this opening. Mr. Park came there after the army had posted itself; he nevertheless attempted to pass. The people began to attack him, throwing lances, pikes, arrows, and stones. Mr. Park defended himself for a long time; two of his slaves at the stern of the canoe were killed; they threw everything they had in the canoe into the river, and kept firing; but being overpowered by numbers and fatigue, and unable to keep up the canoe against the current, and no probability of escaping, Mr. Park took hold of one of the white men and jumped into the water; Martyn did the same, and they were drowned in the stream—attempting to escape."

It is unfortunate that in piecing together Mungo Park's fate we have to rely on the testimony of a native guide who may have had good reasons for distorting the truth and whose account is in several ways implausible. Park's death remains enigmatic and uncorroborated. The very fact that Ahmadi was the party's only survivor places him under suspicion. What if Ahmadi had kept the presents intended for the king? There is no proof one way or the other.

A little more light was shed when the explorer Hugh Clapperton visited Bussa in 1825. He found that the people were very friendly and glad to give him whatever information he wanted, with one exception. When he asked about Mungo Park's death, "everyone appeared uneasy and said it happened before their remembrance, or that they did not see it. They pointed out the place where the boat struck, and the unfortunate crew perished. Even this was done with caution, and as if by stealth." It seemed to Clapperton an admission of guilt, and he was left with the impression that the people of Bussa had ambushed Park in the rapids near their village.

Hope had continued to flicker that Park was alive. It was not until 1819 that the London *Times*, in its May 3 edition, wrote: "The death of this intrepid traveler is now placed beyond any doubt. Many accounts of it have been received." Park's mysterious death added to his legend. He was compared to England's greatest heroes, and in West Africa he became a part of the oral history.

Park's second journey added nothing to geographic knowledge. His principal achievement was establishing beyond doubt the Niger's course, and his fame rests most solidly on his personal adventures. He was the archetypal explorer, to whom what Tennyson wrote about Ulysses is perfectly suited:

> Yet all experience is an arch where thro'
> Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
> For ever and for ever when I move.

Park, with his semicrazed commitment to reaching his destination and his readiness to "die on the Niger" was clearly engaged in a personal challenge. His greatness lies in the force of his obsession. He had looked death in the face and survived, and whatever happened to him after was in the nature of a reprieve.

Ted Morgan's last piece for HORIZON *was on the death of Van Gogh (Autumn, 1974). The story of Mungo Park is condensed from a portion of his book on the Niger, to be published by Houghton Mifflin this spring.*

Clarissa

Abandoned by her family and fleeing from her seducer, Clarissa is thrown into debtor's prison by Lovelace's agents.

A tract for our time no less than its own, it tells how one human being refused to be treated as a thing by another, "the most powerful account of that terrible battle against power to be found in literature"

Samuel Richardson's novel *Clarissa, or, The History of a Young Lady* was first published serially in 1747 and 1748. It contains well over a million words, and occupies four volumes of closely printed pages in the "Everyman" series. Its plot is an old chestnut: the story of a nineteen-year-old girl who, fleeing from an odious marriage that her mercenary, newly rich family wishes to impose upon her, rashly accepts the protection of a notoriously libertine aristocrat, is raped by him, and dies.

It is hard to see why any modern reader should devote sufficient energy and time to a fictitious maidenhead lost so slowly and so long ago. Yet *Clarissa*, for all its apparent demands on time and patience, is entertaining, relevant, and disturbing. I first read it out-of-doors, relaxed and careless, in the idyllic hot summer after I had finished my Oxford University course. I demanded of it no more and no less than that it should capture my imagination and engage my intelligence against the competition of any other book or pleasure available to me. It held me enthralled and delighted for three weeks of solid reading.

My students read it as part of a tightly packed course of literary studies, where long books are always at a disadvantage because they leave less time for reading other books on the syllabus, and where an already blasé literary appetite demands special relevance to the interests of today, as well as originality of form and content and a language that strikes freshly. I remember few of those many students who have read Clarissa's moving story with me who have not found it an exceptional experience. Surely a book, however forbidding sounding, that has passed these two different tests demands at least the curiosity of those who have never read it.

Clarissa's great fame in Richardson's own day may seem to many an even better recommendation. Diderot, Rousseau, Laclos (the author of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, so admired by sophisticates in our own century), Goethe, Balzac—all acknowledged their great debt to this novel. Indeed, Diderot, given perhaps to emotional enthusiasm, wrote: "I will sell my books . . . but thou Richardson, shalt remain with me on the same shelf as Moses, Homer, Euripides and Sophocles." *Clarissa*'s reputation on the Continent remained high until the middle of the nineteenth century, especially in France, although George Eliot with her usual shrewdness remarked in 1876, "The French have been its most enthusiastic admirers, but I don't know whether their present admiration is more than traditional, like their set phrases about their own classics." In any case, the intensity of the book's conflict impressed foreign readers as no other English novel—save, perhaps, *Wuthering Heights*—ever has.

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON

This portrait of Samuel Richardson, one in a series by Joseph Higmore, was painted at about the same time Clarissa *was published.*

In England, *Clarissa*, like all Richardson's novels, had an enormous impact in its own day. But it fell from grace during Victorian times. Jane Austen, Richardson's chief disciple, preferred the detailed manners and prudential morality of his last novel, *Sir Charles Grandison* (1775), which to most of us seems a splendid failure. She protected herself from the violent impact and the deep emotional tension of *Clarissa* by exaggerated parody of its melodrama in her unfinished novel, *Sanditon*. (The British always protect themselves from things too big for them by humor.) The final blow to Richardson was the preference given to Fielding by the great Victorian novelists Dickens and Thackeray. Irked by the growing prudish censorship of their huge middle-class public, they compensated by setting up the manly outspokenness of Fielding against what they saw as the effeminate, excessive sensibility of his rival, Richardson. Thus, only in the past ten years or so has Richardson's overwhelmingly greater passionate depth and formal mastery been recognized once again.

What then is the special power of this novel? I think I must begin with the broad statement that no novel has so extraordinarily combined a striking dramatic presentation of externals, of action and of speech. For most of the long novel we might be in a theatre, listening to the subtle, complex, inner workings of the human mind and soul as represented by Richardson's two main protagonists—Clarissa Harlowe, the heroine, and her pursuer and seducer, Robert Lovelace. This extraordinary combination of the direct impact of man's outer life and the intertwining tightness of man's inner life—a combination every ambitious novelist hopes to achieve—comes about in *Clarissa* through the happy union of the two popular forms of writing by which Richardson was influenced.

As with Dickens, we have to be grateful that Richardson was a poorly educated man. His father, a successful London master-joiner, had been, his famous son tells us, "personally beloved by several Persons of Rank, among whom were the Duke of Monmouth and the First Earl of Shaftesbury . . . [and] notwithstanding he was noted for a quiet and inoffensive man, he thought proper, on the Decollation of the first named unhappy Nobleman, to quit his London business and retire to Derbyshire, tho' to his Detriment." In these reduced circumstances, Samuel Richardson could never aspire to become the clergyman that his Puritan father wanted him to be, and for which his own

extraordinary moral sensibility seemed to make him suitable. He was, instead, apprenticed to a printer, and rose by his remarkable industry and thoroughness and his business acumen to be one of the richest and most successful master printers in London.

In middle and later life, when his success as a novelist led him into learned and polite society, he was always on the defensive about his lack of knowledge of languages, particularly of the Latin and Greek expected of any educated man of the day. But the popular sources that fed his work were far more valuable to a novelist. If he did not know Homer and Virgil in the original, he knew very well, for all his Puritan inclinations, the theatre, with its roots in the colorful language and violence of Jacobean melodrama. He also knew the language of the private letters and diaries by which so many Puritans, especially Quakers, communed with their own souls and acquired such deep self-knowledge. Also, he had been—and this was to be of great significance in his penetrating knowledge of the minds of his heroines—much in demand as a grave and serious but friendly youth who could compose love letters for young women unskilled at writing.

He chose for his novels, then—and it could not have been a happier choice—the letter form. The flow of letters from Clarissa to her friend Anna Howe, and from Lovelace to his crony Belford, and the descriptive letters with which from time to time Miss Howe and Belford, or even more minor characters, take over the story, gives the book an exceptional innerness, a sense of penetration into the central secrets of human purpose. Yet, within those letters, as Clarissa specifically says, the writing is always "to the moment"; that is, all the scenes are given dramatically, with exact reproduction of speech, accent, gesture, and movement of every character *as it happened at the time*. No novel combines such immediacy with such complexity. No novel has such a curious and compelling pace once the reader has been drawn into its flow, because each separate letter hits sharply and rapidly with its dialogue, melodramatic or comic, with its visual directness through the described movements and gestures of the characters, and with carefully sustained tension. Also, the long flow of the novel involves the reader slowly but completely, like an enveloping, inescapable boa constrictor, through the repeated descriptions of the same incident seen through the eyes of two or more correspondents.

This cunningly joined slowness and directness complement each other, for the intricate unwinding of the inner souls of the two main characters adds an exciting depth to the short, vivid scenes, while the careful relevance of the detail of these scenes cuts out those elaborately detailed scenic-backcloth descriptions that slow down novel narratives from Sir Walter Scott onward. The journey before the reader will be, for three-quarters of the book (indeed, until almost the last episode), drawn out and long, but what he is reading at any given moment is sharply felt and quick.

The reader who finds himself moving at *Clarissa*'s unique and hauntingly paradoxical pace, however, will soon find that he is not only being taken into the recesses of the human soul but is participating in a major battle between good and evil. And it is this battle that gives the novel, so quaint to our ear in its diction, although always colorful and lively, its extraordinary relevance for modern readers.

In the battle between Clarissa and Lovelace, we go ever deeper through a beautifully realized fight between two particular individuals: through the social conflict between the Harlowes' bourgeois, acquisitive Puritanism and Lovelace's aristocratic, extravagant, arbitrary will; even through the age-long battle between the sexes, which in this simple form may not outlast our grandchildren's time; and then to something eternal and fundamental in the human condition. For *Clarissa* is finally a novel about the refusal of one human being (the heroine) to be treated as a thing by another (her pursuer, Lovelace). It is, I think, the most complete and powerful account of that terrible battle against power to be found in literature.

From the very first page all Richardson's dramatic sense is used to engage us in this battle. The first quarter of the novel gives us a family situation, with eight or more characters, drawn with beautiful economy. The Harlowes, who for the next three-quarters of the novel are an indispensable off-stage paradise lost to Clarissa by her completely logical filial disobedience and flight, are superbly portrayed as a hardhearted, avaricious, city-merchant family that has made its pile and established itself at Harlowe Place in the country. As the contemptuous, aristocratic Lovelace says in his first letter, "Everybody knows Harlowe Place, for like Versailles, it is sprung up from a dunghill, within many elderly persons' remembrance."

Clarissa, the youngest daughter, is a strange, cygnet child—socially accomplished, talented, spiritually thoughtful, graceful in her beauty; yet her tenacity of will, her sharpness of intelligence, her toughness in misfortune, make Clarissa perfectly credible as the admirable daughter of her wholly repulsive arriviste family. She has, because of her virtues and her charm, been beloved by the family as a social asset, but as the book opens she is beginning to know what it is like to be unloved.

Her very virtues have undone her with her family. Her brother's avarice and jealousy have been aroused because she has been left an independent property by their doting grandfather. Her elder sister begins to hate her for being preferred by the wealthy aristocrat, Lovelace. Her brother, always sensitive of his origins, quarrels and duels with Lovelace. And now, Clarissa, as a dutiful daughter and chattel of her family, is told to forget this glamorous suitor and to give herself instead to an odiously ugly and clumsy rich oaf, Solmes. She refuses and soon learns what rock is concealed beneath her family's former soft indulgence of her. Yet, drawing

upon her real sense of her own rights and her delicacy of feeling, backed by the assurances of years of pampering as the favored child and by the possession of an independent estate, she resists.

The first quarter of the book represents the preliminaries to a war between herself and her family that is never fought. Richardson had, in 1740, edited the diplomatic negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe at the Ottoman Court in the preceding century. He makes wonderful use of his knowledge in this part of the novel. Clarissa, imprisoned in her room, offers various terms of negotiation to her family—she will make this sacrifice and that, and in return be absolved from the hateful marriage; but the family has the power and her proposed "treaties" get her nowhere. In the end she has no alternatives but capitulation or flight.

Only at page 472 of the first volume is she free. Her letter is dated from Saint Albans and she is at an inn with Lovelace, who has contrived to be indispensable to her escape. To get out of the family prison, she has fallen into a far more terrible prison, as a nightmare had already warned her. "Methought my brother, my Uncle Antony, and Mr. Solmes had formed a plot to destroy Mr. Lovelace; who, discovering it, and believing I had a hand in it, turned all his rage against me. I thought he had made them all fly into foreign parts upon it; and afterwards seizing upon me, carried me into a churchyard, and there notwithstanding my prayers and tears, and protestations of innocence, stabbed me to the heart, and then tumbled me into a deep grave already dug, among two or three half-dissolved carcasses; throwing in the dirt and earth upon me with his hands, and trampling it down with his feet. I awoke in a cold sweat, trembling, and in agonies."

She has good reason to do so, for she has escaped from the harsh and dreary family prison into the keeping of an elegant, handsome, witty, accomplished, emotionally half-grown, obsessive, and implacable man. His mania, as he later tells us, is intrigue for its own sake, with women as the center—women reduced to prey to be run down, or puzzles to be solved for amusement. "We begin, when boys, with birds, and, when grown up, go on to women; and both, perhaps, in turn, experience our sportive cruelty." It is all an extension of sport and the chase for Lovelace, as his first appeal to his three libertine followers to help him in his plots against Clarissa shows: "And here's a sketch of my plot. Stand by varlets—Tanta-ra-ra! Veil your bonnets and confess your master."

His behavior, his implacability and ruthlessness, make him an overgrown, out-of-hand schoolboy. He is ludicrous as well as disgusting, and so he knows; for he laughs at his own absurd wickedness as he indulges it, and comes in the end, as Clarissa's courage defeats him, to a weary self-disgust. Yet he is also serious. He is no amoral or even atheistic sinner, but a full believer determined to indulge himself and leave repentence to old age. Late Victorian agnostic critics, like Virginia Woolf's father, Leslie Stephen, could not comprehend this—surely so complete a rogue should be allowed infidelity in his sins, Stephen said. But, of course, it is exactly this equal battle between a Christian villain and a Christian saint that gives full logic to the fight.

Anyway, at the Saint Albans inn, the once spoiled, saintly girl is now the prisoner of her seducer. From this point on, until she escapes from the prison of mortal flesh altogether, Clarissa goes from one prison to another. But a new dimension enters the book in Volume II. For the sake of appearances Clarissa accepts the fiction that Lovelace is her husband. Now she lives in an increasingly nightmarish world of false identity and false information—a parody of the illusion of life on earth itself.

At first, in a move contrived by Lovelace to appear to be her own choice, Clarissa goes to lodgings kept by a major's widow and her nieces in Mayfair. It is, of course, Mrs. Sinclair's brothel, and her nieces Sally and Polly are two prostitutes, whose original respectable virginity was despoiled by Lovelace. As at her parents' home, our respect for Clarissa's innocence is always maintained, because she is never foolish and never off her guard. She suspects from the start that something is wrong with these gentlewomen, but can only suppose that she, a country girl, is ill at ease with the manners of the city.

Stage by stage, Lovelace seeks to confuse and ultimately destroy her vigilant, intelligent defenses. He sends various supposed friends and supporters—honest old gentlemen, worthy captains and the like, who are, of course, all riff-raff with the natural acting powers of con men and all in Lovelace's pay. He plays on Clarissa's affections by feigning serious illness; he plays on her terrors with a bogus fire. All the time he plays upon her loneliness—a country girl in a frightening house in an unknown city.

The jealous women of the brothel and Lovelace's libertine friends, save for Belford who begins to repent and at last

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STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION
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A. Total No. Copies Printed (Net Press Run)	115,300	108,600
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1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, and counter sales	800	800
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becomes Clarissa's chief aid, urge him to have her and be done; but he knows what he wants is to prolong the game and that, in any case, use of force will be as good as defeat. Against all this, Clarissa has only prayer, powerfully reinforced by intelligence, vigilance, and, in her own way, a passion for the deadly game in which she is involved. She does, at last, manage to escape, but not for long, for she knows nowhere else to flee but Hampstead village, where she and Lovelace had taken their only outing. And here, of course, she is immediately discovered.

The Hampstead episode has a peculiar force of its own. For the first time, she is with respectable strangers at Mrs. Moore's lodgings. When Lovelace arrives on the scene, however, the gentlewomen soon take his side, partly because of his resourcefulness in deceit, but also out of their dislike or distrust of Clarissa's intelligence and goodness—and, it must be said, in reaction to her sharp tongue, which, however, can make her as witty as her very witty seducer.

Lovelace brings his long-promised highborn aunt and girl cousin to Hampstead to act as Clarissa's protectors. These ladies immediately lavish affection upon her, break down her defenses (though she remains highly suspicious of some of their "aristocratic" behavior), and take her under their wing. She agrees reluctantly to return to Mrs. Sinclair's to collect her belongings. The noble ladies are called away. A note arrives from the supposed aunt to say that they are detained for the night but will see dear Miss Harlowe in the morning. All her suspicions of these so-called ladies burst upon her; they are, she realizes, more of Lovelace's creatures. Then comes the most pitiful cry of the book: "Now am I indeed a lost creature! Oh, the poor Clarissa Harlowe."

Even so, Lovelace can only achieve his objective when Clarissa is drugged, and even at that point she is caught only because she thinks the taste of the milk bitter, but supposes it is "London milk." (Surely this is the beginning of that long and somewhat unfortunate distrust of the city that marks most English novels.) There is already a hollow ring in Lovelace's triumphant postscript that boldly announces to us what has happened: "and now, Belford, I can go no farther. The affair is over. Clarissa lives." Almost in the next letter he is busy trying to reduce his prize, whose human superiority has evaded his real knowledge, to a thing of little importance: "But peoples' extravagant notions of things alter not *facts*, and when all's done, Miss Clarissa Harlowe but ran the fate of a thousand of her sex." Of course, he knows that if this were so, the whole great battle would simply be another of his dreary, unrewarding Don Juan conquests, even less rewarding than others, for to conquer the unconscious is a peculiarly sterile victory.

It is some time before Clarissa gives us her version of events, but meanwhile Richardson provides us with her "papers," odd jottings written when she is in a state of near collapse and collected by Lovelace from the wastepaper basket. They are a remarkable pioneer probe into associative thought and semirational imaginings, made the more "experimental" by Richardson's professional skill at playing with typography.

When Clarissa returns to herself, her own account of the Hampstead episode and its final terrible end is a splendid and dramatic essay in alternative narrative—skillfully showing how one event can be two things to different people. It is typical of the incomprehension of Richardson's French admirers that his translator, the Abbé Prévost, author of *Manon Lescaut*, cut out this and much of the very skillful intrigue of the whole central section as repetition unnecessary to cultivated minds. In fact, the whole imbroglio is a masterly forerunner of the modern thriller.

And, at last, we reach the slow but deeply moving end of Clarissa. Cut off from her home by her father's curse upon her proud disobedience, thrown into a debtor's prison by the bawdy-house women who hope to please Lovelace ("Methinks, Miss, you are little soily to what we have seen you. Pity such a nice lady should not have changes of apparel"), dogged everywhere by Lovelace's agents, blamed by the world, she resolutely refuses his offer of marriage. It is, of course, her victory.

We may find her slow decline and death, with a coffin in her poor lodgings, a little baroque to our taste—and Richardson puts into Lovelace's mouth a good deal of the mockery we are ourselves ready to provide. Her teasing of Lovelace's hopes by her references to her nearing end—"As for me, never was bride so ready . . ."; "I go to my Father's house . . ."—look to us a little like self-indulgent celebration of spiritual victory. Yet those who have lived with Clarissa through the book will, because of her continued intelligence, her tough defense of her own integrity, her absolute certainty of her duty, find themselves exultant at a spiritual victory that is nevertheless a superb human triumph of the weak over the powerful.

As for Lovelace, he meets his defeat in an even more manic mood—full of wild jokes, such as seeking to attend her deathbed disguised as a chaplain, and even making fiercer and fiercer Heathcliff-like romantic demands. He had once said, "She shall be mine—altho' damnation were to be the purchaser." Now that she has been his, Richardson's logical ruthlessness suggests to us that Lovelace is damned. The knowledge is spoken in a purely worldly sense by one of his wildest cronies: "She was a vixen in her virtue, what a pretty fellow she has ruined!" But it is more than ruin for Lovelace. Wounded by Clarissa's kinsman in a duel in Italy, he dies, crying, "Let this expiate." But we know that his offer of his dead body is no expiation from a man whose desperate search for a meaning in life could find no better satisfaction than to reduce his fellow creatures to things.

Angus Wilson is a distinguished critic, novelist, and short-story writer. His satirical look at the 1920's, For Whom the Cloche Tolls, *was published in England in 1954 and reissued by Viking in 1973.*

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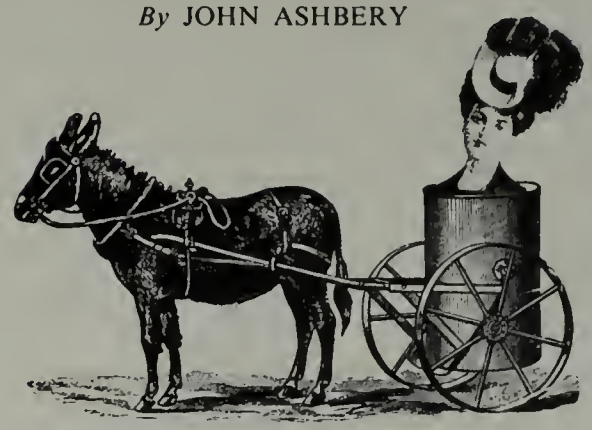
What a Life!

By JOHN ASHBERY



The private life
of the Edwardians
is here revealed
in a (revised) catalogue
from Whiteley's
department store

In a volume of literary reminiscences called *Reading, Writing and Remembering,* published in 1932, E. V. Lucas gives the following account of the composition of *What a Life!*:

In 1911 George Morrow and I hit upon the device of forcing the blocks in a store's catalogue to illustrate a biography, and produced *What a Life!* . . . We applied first to Harrod's for permission and, being refused, went to Whiteley's and were made welcome. The next thing was to get scissors and paste and let ourselves go; and the process of bending the material to our will was, I can assure you, very exhilarating.

The book had very little popularity, but it won a few very faithful friends, and I know one house where a copy of it is chained to the side of the mantelpiece like a Bible in church. . . .

It would be amusing to give the joke a second chance, but the illustrated shilling book is dead, killed by the rise in the prices of production which set in during the War; and to ask more than a shilling would be foolish.

Here one may take issue with Mr. Lucas, who is not the first man of letters to underestimate his lighter productions. The illustrated shilling book is gone, but *What a Life!* is very much alive, and deserves a niche in the pantheon of British nonsense. It also has a certain place in the history of modern art, predating by almost a decade the collages of Max Ernst, who also drew inspiration (but for very different ends) from the engravings in illustrated catalogues.

This fact has been noted by Herta Wescher in *Collage*, her monumental history of the medium. And Raymond Queneau, the French novelist and former member of the surrealist group, has a brief essay on *What a Life!* in his book *Batons, Chiffres et Lettres*, citing its publication date (August 17, 1911) as the moment of the first conjunction of scissors and glue pot "with disinterested ends in view." The book's importance as an object of fantastic art was consecrated in the 1936 Museum of Modern Art exhibition of fantastic art, Dada, and surrealism, where two of its illustrations were included at the suggestion of the writer Jay Leyda, who was at that time on the museum's staff and had discovered *What a Life!* in London a few years before.

Although there is no evidence that Max Ernst knew Lucas and Morrow's little book, the resemblances between it and a work such as Ernst's collage novel *Une semaine de bonté* are striking.* Of course, the raw material—those old steel engravings—was already charged with disturbing suggestions, waiting to be incorporated into fantasy. Queneau mentions the "memory of the precise uneasiness" produced by the catalogues his mother received from the Grande Maison de Blanc. And Marcel Jean in his *History of Surrealist Painting* has noted that at the time Ernst first began cutting up steel-engraved illustrations, this method of reproduction was already old-fashioned and evocative of childhood memories for the people of his generation: "possessing a picturesque quality that is both derisive and very engaging, and which becomes enhanced, revivified by the very humor of the collage." Yet there is terror in Ernst's

*See "An Irresistible Force Called Max Ernst" in HORIZON, Autumn, 1973

collages, heightened by the fact that figures that once stood as symbols of taste and correctness have changed character and are now rampaging in a world of nightmare.

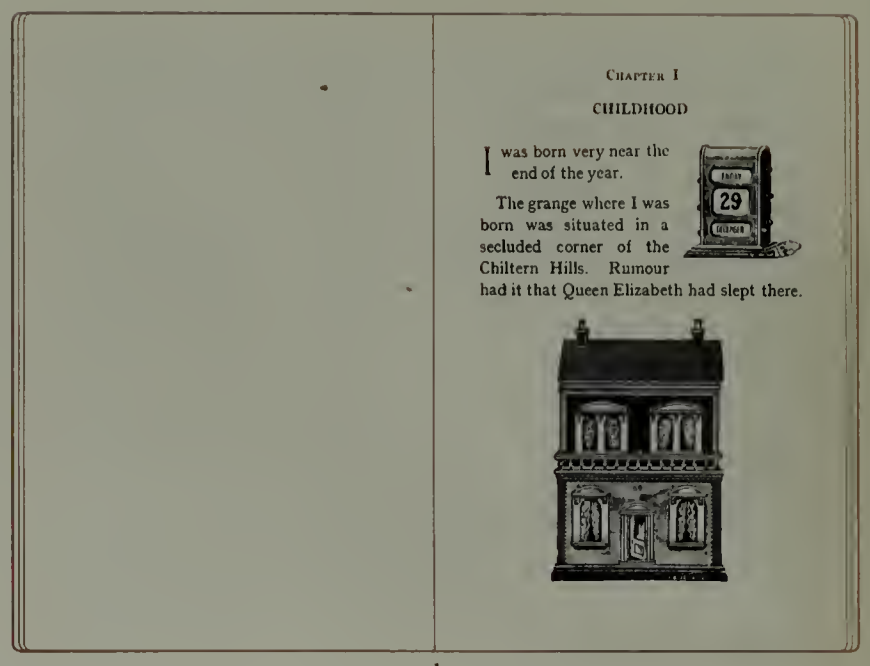
There is no terror in *What a Life!*, but there are veiled suggestions of the uneasiness mentioned by Queneau. Not only is it present in such gothic touches as the "headless apparition" of Sir Easton West's Tudor manor; one also feels it throughout in the dislocations, sometimes farcically broad but sometimes very slight, that separate the pictures from the text.

Marcel Jean says of Ernst's collages that "his point of departure is literally a cliché." *What a Life!* is even more deeply rooted in the cliché: in addition to the reproductions of visual stereotypes from Whiteley's catalogue, the story itself is a continuous literary cliché, deftly sabotaged on every page by the authors' finely honed scissors and pen. Here, as usual, the satirist's attitude toward his material is ambivalent—a "love-hate relationship." Lucas was precisely a writer "entrapped by teatime fame and by commuters' comforts," in Marianne Moore's phrase. He wrote compulsively and continually, using the proceeds to live well in the manner suggested by the frock-coated gentlemen and aigretted ladies who stare from the pages of Whiteley's catalogue. Yet he constantly ridicules the upper classes or, rather, the ambition to belong to them that the catalogue meant to insinuate into its readers.

The visual satire is accomplished through various techniques. One is by the juxtaposition of incongruously unrelated objects (in the manner of Lautréamont's famous "fortuitous encounter of an umbrella and a sewing machine on a dissecting table"). There are relatively few examples of this kind of presurrealist collage in *What a Life!* One of them depicts the unfortunate Lady Goosepelt, a chronic invalid who lived at Bournemouth "in a charming *villegiatura*." But the illustration shows a horse-drawn trash can from which emerges, as in Beckett's *Endgame*, the head of a lady of quality wearing a hat trimmed with ostrich feathers. Another example is the picture of Lord Crewett, "who was never out of riding breeches," and whose breeches are in fact a pair of inverted cruets.

The authors' usual method is to present a single image from the catalogue, diverted from its original context by the accompanying caption. Throughout the book, it is the proliferation of consumer goods deemed indispensable to the well-stocked Edwardian household that is under attack. An elaborate jellied prawn salad turned out of a mold from Whiteley's becomes a new hat sent down from London for the narrator's bride; on the same page a hideous scrollwork *bonheur-du-jour* laden with gewgaws is billed as his "unique collection of Sèvres."

The occasional moments of a slightly darker humor, such as the headless apparition (actually a dress on a hanger emerging from a steamer trunk), are strikingly premonitory of Ernst's *La Femme 100 têtes* (a pun on "La Femme sans

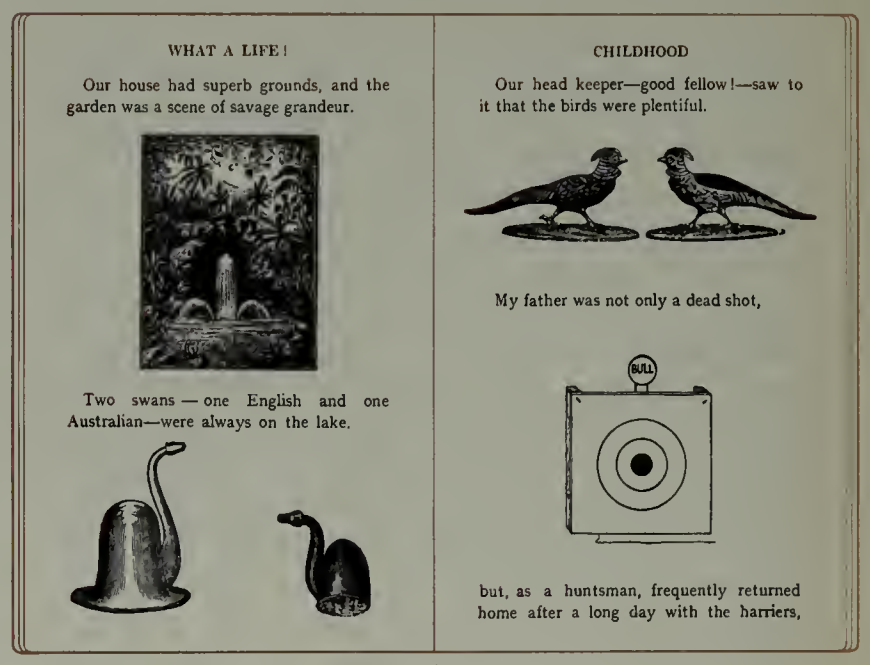

CHAPTER I

CHILDHOOD

I was born very near the end of the year.

The grange where I was born was situated in a secluded corner of the Chiltern Hills. Rumour had it that Queen Elizabeth had slept there.

1


WHAT A LIFE!

Our house had superb grounds, and the garden was a scene of savage grandeur.

Two swans — one English and one Australian—were always on the lake.

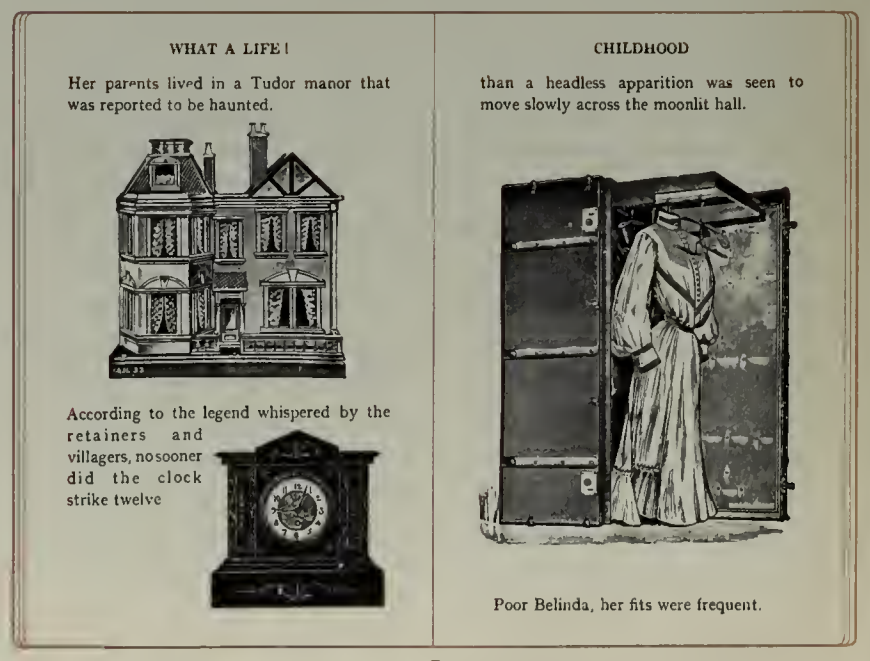
CHILDHOOD

Our head keeper—good fellow!—saw to it that the birds were plentiful.

My father was not only a dead shot,

but, as a huntsman, frequently returned home after a long day with the harriers,

4


WHAT A LIFE!

Her parents lived in a Tudor manor that was reported to be haunted.

According to the legend whispered by the retainers and villagers, no sooner did the clock strike twelve

CHILDHOOD

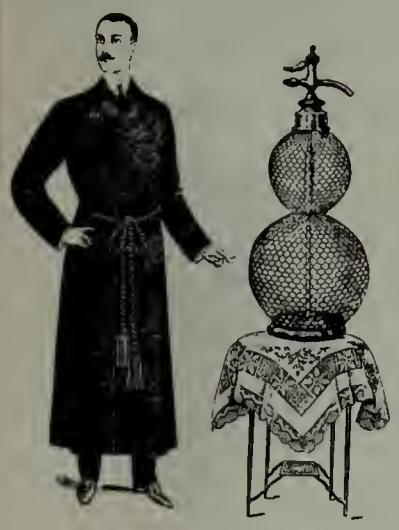
than a headless apparition was seen to move slowly across the moonlit hall.

Poor Belinda, her fits were frequent.

7

WHAT A LIFE!

My father was the soul of hospitality,



CHILDHOOD

and kept cigars to suit all tastes.

Never a very strong man,

2

WHAT A LIFE!

he was perforce a great traveller, and my sweet mother loved to follow his wanderings on the quaint old globe in the library.

CHILDHOOD

Their's was an ideal union. They were sweethearts since the time my mother wore short frocks.

3

WHAT A LIFE!

tired but triumphant, with the brush.

My earliest recollection is of lying in the cradle and wondering if lying was my destiny.

CHILDHOOD

Of all my nurses, Gregson was my favourite.

5

WHAT A LIFE!

She was the daughter of a poor broken-down clarionet player, but was really a lady in spite of her garb of servitude.

CHILDHOOD

Everyone was kind to me Our Dutch gardener adored me,

and I was a prime favourite with our old housekeeper.

But my happiest hours were spent with the little daughter of our neighbour Sir Easton West. She was a pretty child, and, boy-like, I did my best to attract her attention.

6

WHAT A LIFE!

Where she is now I cannot say, but I remember that she became a musician. I was at her first concert. Her triumph was complete. The vast audience rose to its feet and demanded an encore.

CHILDHOOD

I pass over other ordinary occurrences incidental to childhood, such as being kidnapped by gipsies,

and my first visit to the dentist,

and come to my life at the preparatory school, to which I went to discover whether

8

WHAT A LIFE!

I was to serve my country in the Navy or the Army.

9

Tête"). Yet, in the absence of any known link one must assume that Lucas and Ernst were simply in touch with the same Zeitgeist and received emanations of the same absurdity through the medium of a popular imagery, although what in Lucas's work are only polite suggestions of anarchy have become destructive paroxysms in Ernst's.

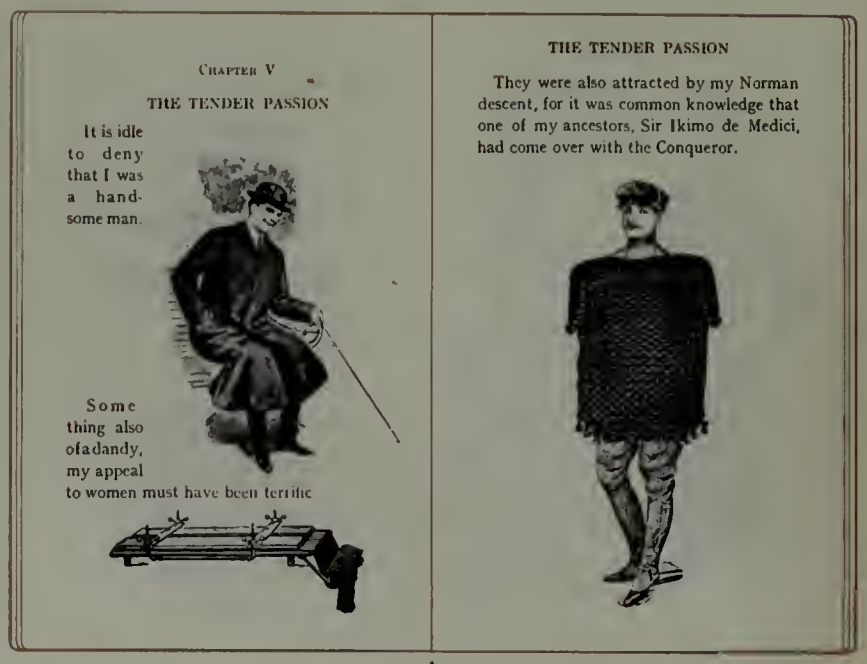
Lucas's daughter Audrey left a memoir of her father that tells us very little about him (though considerably more than Lucas's own volumes of "reminiscences" do). We learn from her that he was rather irritable, hated drafts, and believed in the importance of masticating bread with one's meals. Somehow he himself sounds a likely tenant of Frisby Towers, the cardboard castle where the narrator of *What a Life!* finally settles with his bride ("We were idyllically happy at Frisby Towers, in spite of its outward air of gloom").

An anecdote Audrey Lucas tells of Lucas's later years (he died in 1938 at the age of seventy), after he had left his family for an undivulged reason and set up housekeeping on his own, suggests that he may finally have ended up living out the fantasies he had pilloried so wittily years before.

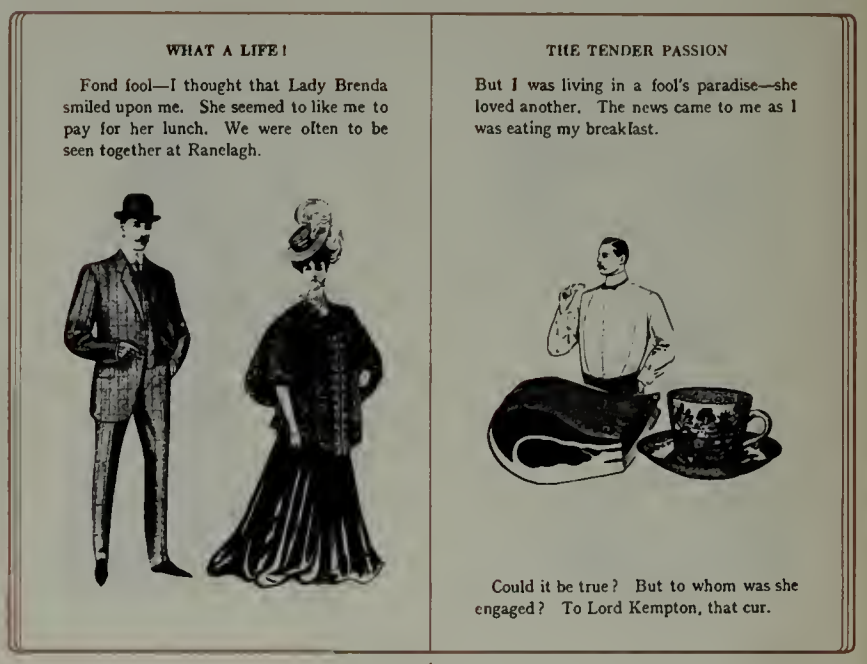
He did, I suppose, go in for a good many of the frills of life; but at these he was quite able to laugh, almost to sneer even. Part of his house in the country had been converted from a cottage, occupied many years before by a shepherd; and E. V., telling me one day that his dining-room, which had in it a great open fireplace, and had been in the shepherd's time the kitchen, went on to say, "Sometimes when I'm having dinner here, I imagine the shepherd's ghost coming back to have a look round. I suppose if he peeped in and saw me sitting here alone, in a dinner jacket, drinking champagne and being waited on by Watkins, he would think it a disgusting spectacle." He paused for split second, before adding, "As indeed it is."

Indeed it may have been, but the story pinpoints the drama behind the surface of *What a Life!*: the conflict between our fascination with the appurtenances of physical comfort that always seem to hold out the promise of a better life, and our knowledge that neither they nor anything else is going to alter the facts of existence on earth. One of his country's greatest poets, Osip Mandelstam, wrote in a letter from Switzerland in 1906: "I have strange taste: I love the patches of reflected light on Lake Leman, respectful lackeys, the silent flight of the elevator. . . . I love bourgeois, European comfort and am devoted to it not only physically but emotionally." Yet his "devotion" never allowed him to abandon the poetry that eventually led him to death in a Siberian prison camp after years of hardship. This tragic ambivalence—the contradictory allegiances to physical and spiritual well-being—exists in all of us and is the core of the situation that Lucas and Morrow elaborated within the confines of their comic masterpiece. What a life, indeed.

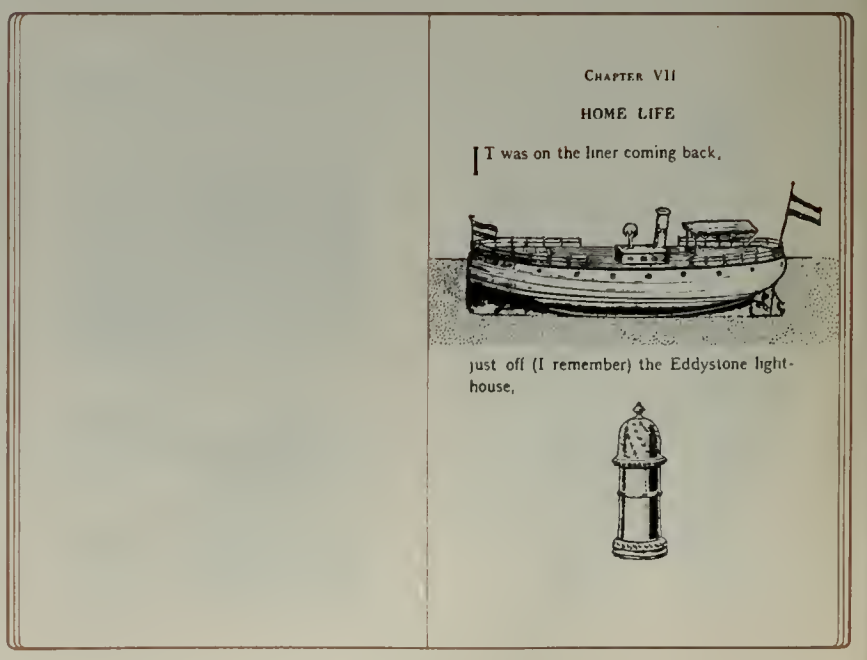
John Ashbery is a poet, novelist, playwright, and editor. This article is adapted from his preface to the reprint of What a Life! *to be issued by Dover Publications in the spring of 1975.*


CHAPTER V
THE TENDER PASSION
It is idle to deny that I was a handsome man.
Something also of a dandy, my appeal to women must have been terrific
THE TENDER PASSION
They were also attracted by my Norman descent, for it was common knowledge that one of my ancestors, Sir Ikimo de Medici, had come over with the Conqueror.

1


WHAT A LIFE!
Fond fool—I thought that Lady Brenda smiled upon me. She seemed to like me to pay for her lunch. We were often to be seen together at Ranelagh.
THE TENDER PASSION
But I was living in a fool's paradise—she loved another. The news came to me as I was eating my breakfast.
Could it be true? But to whom was she engaged? To Lord Kempton, that cur.

4



1

WHAT A LIFE!

Always susceptible, I quickly fell in love. My first *innamorata* was the daughter of a lion tamer, and herself, although a Suffragette, in that romantic profession.

THE TENDER PASSION

Her father disapproved of the intimacy, and we had to correspond clandestinely. She would write and seal her letter, and then place it inside a football, and leave it for me in the place agreed upon.

2

WHAT A LIFE!

But at last I met my fate—Lady Brenda Birdseye. I had motored over to her father's seat—Cavendish Court. I wandered through the house; it was empty. Lunch was not yet cleared away.

THE TENDER PASSION

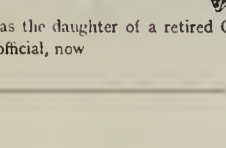
The tennis court was deserted;

but in a hammock in the shrubbery I chanced upon her—asleep. It seemed a pity to disturb her dreams. I gazed, and was fascinated.

3

WHAT A LIFE!

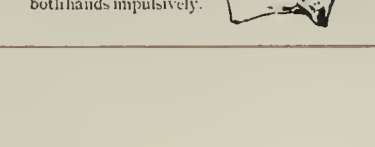
What was I to do? To hail and leap into a taxi was the work of a moment.



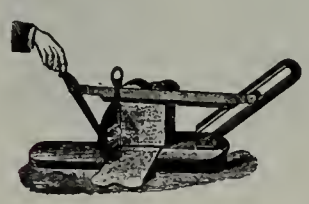
The maid said she was not at home. I said I *must* see her. She saw me. I heard afterwards how she had braced herself for the effort.

THE TENDER PASSION

I vowed to be revenged on my rival, even if I had to follow him to the bottom of the sea.



She gave me no hope and I left her in despair. For days I lived on nothing but a few sandwiches.



5

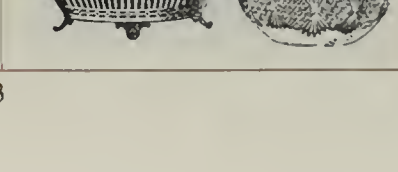
WHAT A LIFE!

Then I grew more philosophic and tried other means to forget her,

but in vain. It was no good, I took to my bed; and for some months my life was despaired of.

THE TENDER PASSION

On recovering sufficiently, I determined to seek peace of mind in travel.



6

WHAT A LIFE!

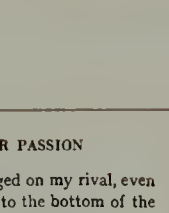
that I met my dear wife.

She was the daughter of a retired Government official, now

HOME LIFE

enjoying a leisurely and happy old age.

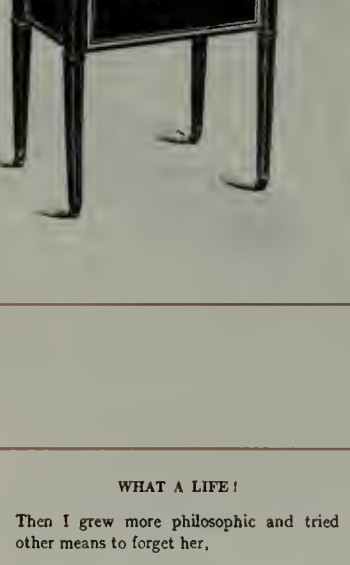
We had long been catching each other's eyes. The time was ripe. When I at last proposed, she gave me both hands impulsively.



2

WHAT A LIFE!

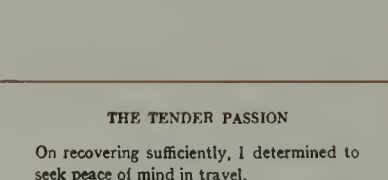
Ours was a romantic engagement,



HOME LIFE

but we decided to cut it very short, and were married directly the village church could be made ready.

We had some very novel wedding presents.



3

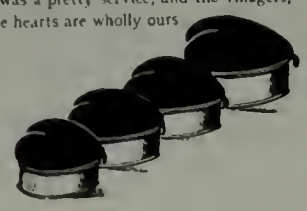
WHAT A LIFE!

My best man was Lord Wagglecleek

HOME LIFE

Almost my oldest friend, I had first met him in the bath.

It was a pretty service, and the villagers, whose hearts are wholly ours

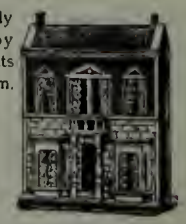


WHAT A LIFE!

gave us a cordial send-off.

HOME LIFE

We were idyllically happy at Frisby Towers, in spite of its outward air of gloom.



We both had rural tastes. My wife was very fond of whipping the stream,

WHAT A LIFE!

and I was, of course, an ardent golfer

One day we took the motor;

HOME LIFE

on the next I ordered out the roan.

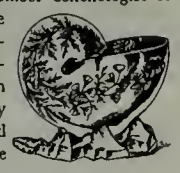
When it rained we knew what to do.

WHAT A LIFE!

I had my hobbies too.

In 1904 I succeeded, after many failures, in obtaining a cross between a tortoise and a porcupine, and the training of the hybrid gives me infinite pleasure.

I was also the foremost conchologist of the country, and the arranging of my collection of 14,000 varieties of winkles, now in the Natural History Museum, occupied many otherwise tedious evenings.



HOME LIFE

Life also had its exciting incidents. Now and then I would add to my unique collection of Sèvres;

or a new hat would come from London for my wife.

WHAT A LIFE!

Sometimes a guest revoked;

while an occasional *fracas* with the plumber also enlivened the routine, as when on one memorable occasion I drew his attention to the inadequacy of the bath.

HOME LIFE

Now and then my wife and I may even have had a tiff, during which we were not on speaking terms; but it soon blew over.

On Sunday we naturally went to church, to which, in my capacity of Squire, I presented a new organ,

WHAT A LIFE!

and where I frequently had the pleasure of hearing the choir render my favourite hymns.